



BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH

*the most
dangerous
man since*

JESUS CHRIST

BY SUE APPLETON

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One A Question Of Danger	7
Chapter Two Trouble From The Beginning	13
Chapter Three Danger Brews In Poona (1974-1981)	23
Chapter Four The Danger Erupts In America (1981-1985)	35
Chapter Five Peer Judgment – A Dangerous Assessment	45
Chapter Six A Worldwide Danger	61



CHAPTER
ONE

A QUESTION OF DANGER

"Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is the most dangerous man since Jesus Christ." Those prophetic words were spoken earlier this year by Tom Robbins, acclaimed as "one of America's greatest living literary authors." He did not know it at the time, but a series of events was about to happen which would fully justify that seemingly excessive statement. A series of events would show that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was feared by every major government in the world.

Why?

Who is Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh?

And how did he become such an extraordinary figure of international controversy?

Actually, Tom Robbins was not the first to call him dangerous. He had earned the reputation from the Indian press back in the sixties when, as a university professor of philosophy, he had angered and shocked a deeply conservative Hindu populace with his revolutionary outspoken views on sex, religion and politics.

Western journalists, whose attention he caught in the late seventies, added their own epithets. But, almost without exception, those who actually went and listened to him at his ashram in Poona were more discerning than their Indian counterparts. They took back to the West descriptions of him as "extraordinary," "remarkable," "deeply impressive," "highly disturbing," and "utterly fascinating."

The full spectrum of Western media came, and commented. Jean Lyell of *Vogue Magazine* described him in September 1977 as "a gentle and compassionate man of complete integrity... the most inspired, the most literate, and the most profoundly informed speaker I have ever heard anywhere." Florence Gall of the German *Cosmopolitan Magazine* called him "charismatic" in the sense of Evita Peron, Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy and Pope John XXIII. Alan Wicker, the merciless commentator of TV's "Wicker's World," said of him in 1979, "He is very beautiful... in action he is enormously impressive." To Marcel Meier of the Dutch

Panorama Magazine, who visited in 1978, he was "a master psychologist with a super brain." He added, "I have never come into contact with anyone quite like him except in books" (*Panorama*, October 13, 1978). Marielouise Alemann of the *Argentinisches Tagblatt* wrote in 1980, "He simply refused to ride on the wave of the soft holy man and to adapt to the image of the all-knowing, compassionate master that inevitably comes to the mind of non-oriental people when the word India or guru is mentioned."

Ronald Conway, lecturer, author, Catholic, and senior consultant psychologist at a leading Australian hospital, published a report of his visit to the ashram in 1980 in which he said, "To be within a few meters of him can create a remarkable effect. Whatever its source, Rajneesh is a person of remarkable power and magnetism, palpable enough to be felt... He made me feel that perhaps Jesus might have been like this" (*The Australian*, February 14, 1981).

And Bernard Levin of *The London Times*, who has been described as the acerbic doyen of conservative social commentators, came away from his 1980 visit "fascinated by my experience of the man... and the people around him." Rajneesh, he said, was "a remarkable teacher... and an extraordinary magnet" (*The London Times*, April 8, 1980).

Such impressions by people one might expect to be the most skeptical indicate that even in those comparatively early days Bhagwan was not just another popularized Eastern guru. As Alan Atkinson put it in the Adelaide (Australian) *Saturday Review* on August 1, 1981, "Rajneesh is clearly no ordinary man. He has been described as a great new spiritual seer, an Enlightened Master in the tradition of Jesus or Buddha, as the 'crazy sage of Poona,' as a present day, joyful, John the Baptist – and by detractors as the Antichrist, a madman, the most dangerous man in the world. For the past couple of years his presence and influence have intrigued psychologists, psychiatrists, churchmen, journalists and professional skeptics in the West."

By 1986, just four and a half years later, that same intriguing presence and influence had caused almost every country in the world to put a red alert next to the name of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in their computer – "danger to national security... presence not conducive to the public good... against the interests of the State... do NOT permit entry."

Why?

The epithet "dangerous" had been provoked simply by his ideas. There was no question of his being dangerous in the sense of a terrorist or a coup leader. He was, according to all accounts, a man who never left his house.

a man in fact who never even left his room save to give discourses. A man who did nothing but speak. A man who, despite intense investigation in the two countries in which he had lived (India and America), had never been convicted of any crime except that of making false statements to immigration officials.*

Why then did the German, Swiss, Australian and Dutch governments all pass emergency decrees in 1986 that he not be allowed to set foot in their countries?

Why did Italy and Sweden refuse him tourist visas to visit?

Why did England refuse to let him stay overnight in transit at Heathrow while his jet was grounded for eight hours?

Why was he abruptly deported from Greece after only two weeks of a four-week stay – two weeks in which he had never left his house?

Contrary to rumors eagerly circulated by the yellow press, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh has never been charged with any offenses in India. In America, after a four-year investigation by every government agency, the only charges made against him were the paltry ones of falsely stating on arrival that he had no intention of remaining in the country permanently when in fact he did intend to do so, and that he induced some people to apply for residence in America on the basis of marriages he knew were fraudulent (this at a time when he was in a well-documented period of silence... See Chapter Four.)

Why did Canada refuse to let the jet in which he was a passenger land for just forty-five minutes to refuel – even with a bond to guarantee that he would not step out of the plane?

Why did a spate of easy-going Caribbean Islands, at the merest whiff of a press rumor that he was going there, alert their airports not to let his plane land?

Why did Jamaica, after giving him a ten-day visa, order him to leave the country within twenty-four hours of his arrival?

Why did a group of Christian Democrats present a motion to the

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European Parliament urging the member countries to take measures to prevent him ever residing on their territory?

Why did the Vatican request all Italian newspapers it controlled to make no mention even of his name?

Why did the KGB round up his supporters in Russia and confiscate all books and tape-recordings of his discourses?

Why did the US Attorney-General Ed Meese state that he wanted him "back in India never to be seen or heard of again?" And why did the US government resort to blackmail to ensure that he did not remain in the Western world?

What was there that made the mightiest governments of the world so afraid of one man who had no political position of any kind, who represented nobody but himself, and who did nothing but speak?

Who was this man who could unite communists, capitalists, Catholics and fascists in an unheard-of holy alliance against him?



CHAPTER
TWO

TROUBLE FROM
THE BEGINNING

In light of what was to come, the designation "troublemaker" bestowed on Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh from his earliest years does not seem surprising. Even without the benefit of hindsight he was at the least a 'mischievous' child, and his well-known sense of humor, combined with an unusual lack of awe for adults and an irresolute determination to discover everything for himself rather than be told what to do, made him a formidable proposition especially to those who tried to 'normalize' or even just control him.

The eldest of thirteen children, he was born to a Jaina cloth merchant in a village in the middle of India at the end of 1931. His birth, at the home of his mother's parents, seems to have been the first and last 'normal' thing he ever did. His grandparents, who lived alone in a large house in another village, fell in love with him at first sight and he remained with them for the next seven years.

Those formative years, spent with doting grandparents who, he admits, spoilt him utterly, allowing him complete freedom to do absolutely what he wanted, undoubtedly contributed to the "wild, unruly and undisciplined" nature that was the cause of frequent complaints from neighbors and village elders. But in addition to his upbringing (or lack of it) he seems to have been born the quintessential rebel – not just a strong-willed boy with a non-conformist streak, but a boy dedicated to defying every established rule and every accepted form of behavior devised by society, and questioning every accepted belief and conviction. His early experiments were relatively innocent, but gave some clue as to what might follow.

For example, on one occasion he asked a neighbor, who disturbed everyone with loud praying and devotional singing for three hours every morning and three hours every evening, what he prayed for. He told the man, Balaji, that his grandfather said he prayed because he was a coward. Balaji vehemently denied it and the boy decided to test him. The next day, not without some difficulty, he persuaded four wrestler friends (he had taken to dropping in at the local wrestling school) to help him with a trick

on Balaji. Balaji slept on a cot in his garden, near a small well. In the middle of the night, egged on by the boy, the wrestlers carried the cot with the sleeping Balaji and placed it over the top of the well. Then they all hid behind some bushes and threw stones to wake him up. He woke up, saw where he was – and gave an almighty scream that aroused the whole neighborhood. From amidst the crowd that gathered the young Rajneesh asked, “What is the matter? Why didn’t you call your god? You train six hours a day, but you gave a scream and forgot all about God.”

Fortunately, in this and in many other similar incidents, his grandparents defended him fiercely. His grandfather, an influential and respected figure in the village, was himself something of a mischief-maker, and seems to have gleefully encouraged the boy in his disconcerting habit of disrupting religious meetings by asking simple but unanswerable questions, or challenging visiting monks and holy men to prove their spiritual claims. He asked one Jaina monk, who had been teaching not to believe anything without personal experience, how he knew there was an eternal hell, since if it was eternal he could not have visited it and come back to tell. Another time he asked “Who created this beautiful universe?” Jainas do not believe in God, so the monk replied, “no one.” “Then if no one created it,” said the boy, “how did it come to be?”

Such questions generally ended the meetings and ended the reputation of the monk. Few ever returned. His grandparents were proud of him – the other villagers wary. As Rajneesh himself has said, *“As far back as I can remember, I loved only one game – to argue. So very few grown-up people could stand me. Understanding was out of the question.”* He remained ‘wild’ and uneducated to the age of seven, when his grandfather died. He has frequently and fondly talked about those early years, explaining that *“with me something went wrong from the very beginning, and the reason was that for seven years I was not with my parents. I lived with my maternal grandparents. Those two old persons had no investment – they simply loved me. I was only a guest...they acted out of a space which parents cannot...they allowed me total freedom to be myself... Somehow I remained out of the grip of civilization...I became a really strong individualist, hard core... By a strange coincidence I was saved from my parents. And by the time I reached them, I was almost on my own. I was already flying. I knew that I didn’t need anybody’s help to make me.”* But people certainly needed help to cope with him. With his grandfather’s death he and his grandmother went to live in his father’s village of Gadawara. There he was sent for the first time to school – *“dragged to jail”* as he described it.

The self-assurance and sense of authority that had thrived under the freedom allowed him by his grandparents quickly made him an outspoken rebel at school. He obtained a copy of the Education Code and unhesitatingly took his teachers to the headmaster if he was punished for any offense not specifically mentioned in the code. "Where does it say I cannot look out of the window at the beauties of nature instead of at the dull, lifeless blackboard?" he would ask. That he spent more time standing outside the classroom than inside, being punished for questioning the teacher or answering back, or causing some other kind of disturbance, testifies to his determination "to do everything that was not allowed."

He questioned everything hypothetical. Even a child can see through Euclid's definition that a line has length but no breadth, he told a teacher, challenging him to draw a line on the board without breadth, and a point without any length or breadth. The teacher told him to leave the classroom and go settle things with Euclid himself.

He led other students in protests against meaningless rules, such as the compulsory wearing of cloth caps (the requirement was abandoned), and against harsh disciplines (he lodged complaints for cruelty with the police). On his very first day at school he had a teacher dismissed who was punishing the young children by inserting pencils between their fingers and squeezing (the seven year-old Rajneesh had gone immediately after school to the headmaster, then to the police commissioner, and finally to the president and the vice-president of the municipal corporation).

It was not just his actions, but his attitude that drove to distraction all those who had to deal with him. For instance he never took punishment as a punishment, but rather as a reward. If told to run around the school seven times he would thank the teacher and run around it ten times, explaining that he had had no chance to do his exercise that morning and this was a great opportunity. If told to stand outside the classroom he would loudly extol the virtues of being in the fresh clean air with nature instead of in the dirty, stuffy classroom. When his teachers, in exasperation, threatened him with corporal punishment, he immediately threatened to go to the police station with a lawyer friend of his father (corporal punishment was banned in Indian schools).

One teacher tried fining him, writing his name in the Fines Register in the principal's office. Rajneesh immediately went and wrote in the teacher's name with a doubled fine. When the principal asked him if he had gone mad, he replied that there was nothing in the rules to say a student couldn't fine a teacher who was misbehaving. The teacher had misbehaved, he explained, by punishing his father, who would have to pay

the fine, instead of the real wrongdoer, the son. "Why should my father be punished? He is not involved in this at all. Unless the teacher pays. I am not going to pay." Both fines remained unpaid.

He played truant frequently, forging notes from his parents. His teachers were too relieved by his absences to question the matter further. In his quest to discover everything he could about life he explored the town and everything in and around it, spending long hours with wrestlers, snake charmers, circus performers, magicians, drunkards, musicians and wanderers of all kinds. Intrigued by death, for a time he attended all kinds of dying people, regardless of whether or not he knew them (a source of great embarrassment to his family which kept strictly within Jaina social circles). He visited fairs and attended holy festivals of all religions – Jaina, Hindu and Mohammedan.

He was always questing and experimenting, particularly on himself. The small group of fearless boys who attempted to follow him often found themselves in deep water – literally. He led them in dives off an incredibly high railway bridge into the Shakkar River, and swam across it in waters raging and swollen by the monsoon rains (one of the boys was swept away and drowned on one of those swims). He experimented with being sucked down into whirlpools, discovering that if he allowed them to take him down instead of fighting them, he could simply slip out of their force at the bottom. At night his friends followed him on narrow paths which ran along the cliff-face high above the river – a "hair-raising experience" as one friend later reported.

He played humiliating tricks on teachers and townspeople he considered pompous, pious or hypocritical. A teacher who delivered a lofty lecture on the finer points of courage and fearlessness was quickly put to the test. Rajneesh, who during one of his many trancies had persuaded a Mohammedan snake charmer to teach him the art of capturing snakes, brought a large snake to the school in a sack. To his immense delight, the teacher jumped onto the table and shouted for help when Rajneesh displayed the snake in his classroom. "Great show of fearlessness," commented the boy.

On another occasion Rajneesh brought down a very proud and pious teacher who refused to answer any of his questions in class. The teacher was bald, and Rajneesh nicknamed him "Munde" ("Baldy"). The teacher pompously refused to acknowledge the name, so Rajneesh collected twenty rupees (a great sum in those days – far too much for a low-paid teacher to ignore), and bought a postal money-order in the name of Chotelal Munde. The teacher had to sign the order before he could collect

the money, and Rajneesh arranged for the postman to deliver it during class. When he read it the teacher quivered in self-righteous indignation – for a few moments. Then greed got the better of pride, and “Munde” signed in front of the whole class. Another victory for reality, and another lesson about hypocrisy. Rajneesh nicknamed another very self-important and narrow-minded Brahmin teacher “Bhulle Baba” – bhulle meaning simpleton. The nickname was eagerly adopted, not just by the students, but by the townspeople as well. The man’s wife, a thin nagging type, constantly admonished Rajneesh not to use the name, but at her husband’s funeral she threw her arms around the body and herself cried out, “Oh, my Bhulle Baba!” Rajneesh, seeing the absurdity of the situation, burst out laughing, shocking everyone.

His father received the constant stream of complaints about him with resignation. He had learnt very early on that it was safest not to interfere in his son’s life. He had tried twice, when Rajneesh first came to live with him after his grandfather died. The boy’s hair was long and unruly – he had never allowed his grandparents to cut it – he wore a peculiar style of Punjabi clothing which he had admired and copied from a visiting singing troupe. With his long hair and unusual clothes, which were similar to those worn by a woman in his father’s district, people thought he was a girl. It didn’t bother him, but it embarrassed his father, particularly when customers asked, “Whose girl is that?” as Rajneesh passed through the shop on his way home. Offended and frustrated by the boy’s refusal to conform, his father finally cut his hair. Rajneesh promptly went to an opium-smoking barber he had befriended (all his friends were unusual), and persuaded him to shave his head bald. The barber did so reluctantly, because a boy’s head was only shaved when his father died. The seven year-old then exhibited his newly bald head all over town, and watched his father’s acute embarrassment as the inevitable inquiries and condolences began to flood into the shop. Later, when other members of the family tried to force him into more conventional attire by hiding his favorite Punjabi clothes, he simply walked out of the house and into the shop naked. His clothes were returned immediately.

Rajneesh did not spare his family. On one occasion his father saw a man coming to the house he did not like and told Rajneesh to tell him he was not at home. Rajneesh opened the door and said, “My father said to tell you he wasn’t at home.” When his family tried to make him go to the Jaina temple, he slipped out early and put some sweets on top of Mahavira’s statue. When he returned to the temple later with his parents a rat was there, eating the sweets and urinating down Mahavira’s face. “What

kind of a god is that, who can't even save himself from a rat?" he asked. The family soon gave up and left him to himself.

Growing up, Rajneesh flirted with politics for a while, spending long hours in intense argument and discussion with friends. At school and at university he was famous as a debater, winning gold medals and the All-India debating title. He was always questioning, never content with the solutions to life provided by those in authority. He says that his interest in life then, as now, was "to know what is the ultimate." He devoured every book in the town library – many today still have only his name on their reader cards. And he spent long periods alone in self-discovery and in meditation.

The young Rajneesh has been described by chroniclers, writing later from the safe distance of historical perspective, as "a gifted, spirited, independent-minded individual" (Professor Paul Heelas in *The Way of the Heart*, Aquarian Press, 1986), and as "a boy of exceptional intellect and charisma" (Ronald Conway in *The Weekend Australian*, February 14-15, 1981). Those who suffered him contemporaneously saw him differently. Relatives described him to reporters in later interviews as willful, headstrong and naughty. Others outside the family circle described him somewhat less politely as immodest, brazen, discourteous, disrespectful, and even seditious. The end-of-year remarks given by all his teachers, and particularly by his principal, condemned him "as much as was possible on a certificate." He once told his principal, "This is not a character certificate, it is a character assassination."

However, despite his many absences and his equally numerous rebellions, Rajneesh graduated from High School. He was always passed in every subject – so that he could be passed on as quickly as possible to the next teacher. No one wanted a second year of him in their classroom.

Rajneesh went on to university college in Jabalpur. Actually he went to two colleges. He was asked to leave the first when his logic professor complained to the Vice-Chancellor that he could not teach because Rajneesh would not stop asking questions. He questioned everything the professor said, starting long but logical arguments in every class. Admonished by the professor not to argue, Rajneesh pointed out that this would defeat the whole purpose of being in a class on philosophy and logic. Exasperated, the professor, an old and respected man, gave the ultimatum that "either Rajneesh leaves or I leave." The Vice-Chancellor found Rajneesh a place in another college, but his reputation had preceded him and a condition was made that he not attend the philosophy classes at the new college. Rajneesh agreed happily.

He preferred to teach himself in the library, where he continued his voracious reading. He also continued to torture his professors. He noticed that few of them ever visited the library, and he proceeded to pepper them with questions about up-to-date material in their field. When he discovered one professor who would never admit that he did not know something, Rajneesh trapped him by quoting in class a fictitious book *Principia Logica*. When the professor replied that he had read the book, Rajneesh exposed him to the Vice-Chancellor. "In college he did not spare a teacher who spoke an untruth, and he rebelled against tradition and shocked people by his unconventional mode of thinking," reported the *New Delhi Patriot* in a review of Rajneesh's life published in 1981. Despite antagonizing his professors, in 1957 he gained a first-class M.A. in logic, philosophy and literature.

In the middle of this period, at the age of twenty-one, Rajneesh became 'enlightened.' "Enlightenment simply means an experience of your consciousness unclouded by past emotions, sentiments," he explained. "When the consciousness is totally empty, there is something like an explosion – like an atomic explosion." The "explosion" occurred on March 21, 1953, as Rajneesh, like Buddha before him, sat beneath a solitary tree. The tree still stands in the public garden at Jabalpur. Describing the experience he said, "Your whole inside becomes full of light which has no source and no cause or past, and once it has happened it remains. It never leaves you for a single moment. Even when you are asleep that light is inside, and after that moment you can see things in a totally different way." In 1958, aged twenty-six, he was appointed philosophy teacher at the Sanskrit College of Raipur, and later Professor of Philosophy at the University of Jabalpur. Described by Ronald Conway as a "brilliant but unorthodox professor," he continued to cause controversy. For example, rather than simply teaching the set syllabus, he preferred to give his students a fully rounded picture. "I was teaching students everything that the university prescribed and also showing them, in this prescribed teaching, that how much was bogus," Rajneesh said later. "I was teaching Aristotle, and at the same time I was teaching them that Aristotle was not right. My period was divided into two sections: first, I will teach them what Aristotle means, and then I will say that he is wrong. So, I was complained against because this was a strange way of teaching and the students were getting confused." But he was immensely popular and his classes were packed, not just with students from other faculties (officially, only five students were registered for philosophy), but also by many of the professors.

At the same time Rajneesh began traveling the length and breadth of

India, "seized with a mission of awakening sensitive people from what he believed to be a sleep-walking intellectual materialism," wrote Ronald Conway (*The Weekend Australian*, February 14-15, 1981). The *New Delhi Patriot* preferred to say, "He traveled widely and racked up controversies wherever he went."

In 1966, after nine years of teaching, Rajneesh left the university to travel full time giving lectures. He said, "*I found it was foolish wasting time in the university teaching twenty students when I can teach 50,000 people in one single meeting. From the university, I moved to the universe.*"

He spoke to religious gatherings and meditation camps all over the country. An exciting and entertaining speaker, he was initially invited to address many prestigious conferences. However, his delight in controversy, and his endless and uncompromising attacks on any and every deeply-rooted belief that he felt was not based on truth or logic, soon made him an enemy of the establishment. He tore into organized religion, delivering a scathing indictment of the Shankaracharya of Puri, the high priest of Hinduism, at the Second World Hindu Religion Conference at Patna. He vehemently attacked India's long-standing macabre love affair with poverty, condemning the revered Gandhi for crippling India with his anti-modern, anti-technology thinking. Gandhi's preoccupation with the poor, he said, had hindered their liberation from poverty.

In the same vein he lashed out at another national hero, Mother Teresa, for manipulating the orphan problem in order to create more converts to Catholicism. Her stance against birth control, he said, shows that she is not trying to fight poverty, merely trying to create more Hindu babies which she can 'save' for Catholicism, winning a Nobel Prize in the bargain. Poverty could only be eradicated, he maintained, through 'absolute' birth control and education. He insisted that wealth was a necessary precursor to spiritual seeking, the poor man being too preoccupied with food and other survival basics to think about his spiritual needs. In a country where poverty and renunciation were blindly associated with sainthood, these views were not surprisingly considered shocking. A few years later he outraged religious leaders further when he began to lecture that sex was a path to enlightenment.

In 1969 Rajneesh, now referred to as "Bhagwan," meaning "the blessed one," settled in Bombay. At the same time he continued to conduct his controversial meditation camps at Mount Abu in Gujarat. He had begun in the mid-sixties with traditional quiet meditations, but soon realized they were inappropriate to the needs of modern man, full of neurotic forces "boiling within." He began to experiment with all sorts of

bizarre meditations to allow people to throw off their neuroses in a wild frenzy of uninhibited abandonment, until exhausted, they finally reached a quiet space within. He introduced his famous Dynamic Meditation, now practiced all over the world, at one of those camps. At about the same time he stopped accepting invitations to speak publicly and started concentrating on work with the group of disciples which had gathered around him. By then he was attracting a large following of Westerners, and a lot of outraged publicity from Indians.

In 1974 he moved to a six-acre ashram in Poona, with no apparent intention of changing his ways – ways which were certainly unorthodox, even heretical, but... dangerous?

CHAPTER
THREE

DANGER BREWS
IN POONA
(1974 – 1981)

What happened in Poona caught the immediate attention of the West. So much so that by 1978 the Ashram of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was receiving over 2000 visitors per day from all over the world, including, of course, the paparazzi.

Bhagwan himself was the main attraction. As Bernard Levin put it, he was a most "extraordinary magnet." He spoke every morning for those seven years except for the rare occasions when he was unwell. "He sits there in a great open hall for two hours every morning and talks from memory to about 2000 people. His subjects cover Zen Buddhism, the Bible, Sufism, Hinduism, the theories of Freud, Jung and Adler, present day nuclear physics, classical philosophers and Eastern masters," wrote Marcel Meier in 1978 (*Panorama Magazine*, Netherlands, October 13). Without exception everyone who reported those Poona discourses noted Bhagwan's "erudition and extraordinary range of subjects."

"His range of reference, mood and approach can be dazzling. He seems to have absorbed the essential message of every Eastern spiritual master and of most Western philosophers and psychologists as well," wrote Ronald Conway in 1981 (*The Weekend Australian*, February 14-15), adding that Rajneesh was one of the most extraordinary people he had ever met. "He has an amazing acquaintance with Eastern philosophy, Western intellectual tradition and psychology" – Ronald Clarke, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Oregon (*Report to the Oregon Committee for Human Rights*, September 27, 1983). "Rajneesh reveals a brilliant mind...an exceptional talent as a speaker, a broad cultural background and the charisma of an ancient Eastern sage. His books (transcribed from his discourses) are the most captivating works on meditation one can find." – Claudio Lamparelli, *Techniche della Meditazione Orientale (Techniques of Eastern Meditation)*. "He is not an ordinary guru. He is brilliantly educated; he speaks fluent English; he is conversant with the full sweep of Eastern religious tradition; he is also acquainted with Western and Eastern psychotherapeutics; moreover he is an

outrageous wit" – John R. Fry, *Frying Pan Magazine* (USA, June 1983).

Even the Indian press acknowledged his virtuosity. K. M. Talgeri wrote in the intellectual *New Delhi Patriot* on August 6, 1981: "From his discourses you see him as a Tantric, a Sufi, a Hassid, a Christian mystic, a Zen and a Yogi. His teachings (if that is the right word) contain the best of all the ancient systems of mysticism."

Bernard Levin, who visited the Ashram several times in 1980 as part of an extensive trip throughout the East to draw a spiritual map (Bhagwan was given the highest rating), described the discourses in *The London Times* (April 8, 9, 10, 1980) as follows: "The scene is a huge makeshift auditorium, roughly oval in shape, a marquee with a flat stone floor; it is open all round but has a simple roof of matting and corrugated iron, supported on slim, crude, wooden pillars. On the floor some 1500 people are sitting; the frailer among them (including me) have thin cushions. They all face a raised marble platform set midway along one side of the hall; on it there stands a plain swivel chair (it looks a good deal more comfortable than my bit of the floor, cushion and all); a microphone on a stand projects over the chair's arm. The time is a quarter to eight in the morning. We are in Poona.

"The first surprise is the color; almost literally every person in the place is wearing orange. There is a very wide variety of garments but the color, though the shade varies from almost yellow to almost red, is common to all. The second surprise is that there is total silence throughout this orange sea; over a loudspeaker there comes an appeal against coughing, but the plea is unnecessary, for the silence is unbroken, and deeper than the 'Bayreuth hush' itself. Accompanying the silence is stillness; the orange sea is frozen, row upon row of graven images.

"The silence is broken by the crunch of a car's wheels and the accompanying purr of an expensive engine. As it approaches, I experience a third surprise; mine is the only head that turns.

"An orange-clad attendant, on the watch for this moment, moves forward to open the car door; out of it there steps, with unhurried graceful movements, a figure dressed in a white robe, beneath which his feet are clad in simple white sandals. He walks slowly into the hall, his hands together in the traditional Indian greeting, and mounts the steps to the marble platform. He stands in front of the chair and turns through 180 degrees, extending the silent greeting to the whole hall; it is returned by the orange audience. He is tall, though not exceptionally so, bald on top but with long hair hanging down behind, and luxuriantly gray-bearded. He smiles, and sits down in the chair. An attendant steps forward and hands

him a small folder. He puts it on his lap, opens it, takes a slip of paper from it, and speaks for an hour and three-quarters without pause, hesitation, repetition or notes.

...Although I can convey something of his technique as a speaker, and of course quote his words, the astonishing effect it has – an effect which seems to bathe the hearer in a refulgent glow of wisdom and love – is something which is easier to experience than to describe.

His voice is low, smooth and exceptionally beautiful; his English is surprisingly idiomatic and syntactically almost, though not quite, perfect. His gestures are hypnotically graceful and eloquent; he has extraordinary long fingers, and he uses his hands, particularly the left, in an endless variety of expressive forms.

What he says is couched in language of great power and fluency; he is one of the most remarkable orators I have ever heard, though there is no hint of demagoguery in his style, and no oratory or pedagogic feeling about the content of what he says. He uses quotations and references very freely (these seem to be written down, as are some of the jokes, but they constitute the only notes he uses); in the three discourses I heard, on three consecutive days, he quoted Bertrand Russell, William James, Norbert Wiener, e e cummings, Nietzsche, Whitman, and others. Some of his references seem dubious: was Freud phobic about looking into others' eyes; did Jung have a phobic fear of death and fall psychosomatically ill every time he tried to set out on a long-desired visit to Egypt 'to see the mummies'? Is there a suicide-rate among psychiatrists twice as high as among the rest of the populations? Is the average time an American spends in one dwelling three years, and is the average length of American marriages the same?

Se non e vero.... Rajneesh is not trying to purvey information but a truth that bypasses conscious thought and all that belongs to it, just as the most important activities of human beings bypass the mind. I filled pages with notes of his words, but I am vividly aware that quotation can offer only a string of *apercus*, divorced from the context (itself meticulously constructed and shaped, despite the absence of notes) of passion and conviction in which they are set. Nevertheless: *'We are called escapists, but if your house is on fire and you escape, nobody calls you an escapist.'*

'A man who is split can never be a master of himself.'

'I have never seen humanity; I have only seen human beings.'

'People love humanity and kill human beings.'

'Just as illness is infectious, so is health.'

'How can you love others if you do not love yourself?'

'If you go to hell willingly, you will be happy there; if you are forced into paradise you will hate it.'

'The person you become dependent upon also becomes dependent on you; slavery is always mutual.'

'The politician who climbs the ladder until he gets to the topmost rung looks foolish because climbing is the only skill he has, and there is nowhere further to climb; he is like the dog that runs barking after every car and looks foolish when it overtakes one.'

'A person who is not open lives in a grave.'

"As I say, such statements, stripped bare, cannot convey the effect of a Rajneesh discourse. (These, incidentally, are all published verbatim, involving an output of some fifty volumes a year, and they are also recorded in cassette-recording form.) And apart from the effect and persuasiveness of his words, and – an even greater force – the torrent of love-imbued energy that is released into the surrounding atmosphere as he speaks, there is, and remains with me, the profound meaning of what he was saying.

"At the end of the discourse (he invariably signs off with the words ('Enough for today')), he leaves in the same showman style that marks his entry. I watched the crowd after he had gone, and to do so was in itself profoundly instructive. Many remained seated as they had been while he was speaking, continuing to meditate silently on what they had heard. Some came up to the marble platform from which he had spoken, and prostrated themselves across it, clearly seeking to absorb some of the energy that he had expended, and that could indeed be thought of as forming a pool in which the seekers could soak themselves. Some couples embraced, remaining wrapped for minutes on end; nobody paid them any attention, let alone exhibited embarrassment, and this was something I was to see throughout the day at the ashram. It is not difficult to see an explanation: Rajneesh's teaching is, at bottom, of love, and the air is full of it. The love to which he points is not, of course, the body's rapture, but it is hardly surprising that for some the route lies along that path. It is no doubt this fact, together with Rajneesh's argument that we have to work through our impulses before we can transcend them (since they will take their revenge if we attempt the impossible task of suppressing them altogether) and the various encounter groups that operate in the ashram, that the gossipers outside have in mind when they circulate their stories of dark deeds.

"... As I moved out with the rest of the audience, I embarked on an experiment that I had tried a few weeks before, in London – to be precise, in Selfridges. On that earlier occasion, I had passed among the shopping

crowds, consciously examining every face I saw, seeking to discover how many of them showed that the individual in question was possessed of that wholeness, that serenity that issues in happiness, and that denotes one who has mastered the external circumstances of life by first understanding the master within. I gazed into a couple of hundred faces, and then could gaze no more, so universal was the withered misery I saw, the tension of unresolved conflict, the emptiness and loss, the pain of separation, guilt and fear.

"Now, among the hundreds into whose faces I looked as we emerged from Buddha Hall, I could see hardly a single one that resembled those in London. These faces were not lost or even resigned; they were not the faces of men and women who had laid their burdens on another; they were not the faces of those who had given up the struggle and chosen to ignore a world they could not face; almost without exception, these faces were alive, expressive, contemplative, serene, interested, eager. In a word: innocent."

Bernard Levin is no pushover. Yet he, and many other hard-bitten professional journalists who came with the deep skepticism of their trade, left with reports like this. Dutch journalist Marcel Meier described how the process happened: "I still had my prejudices for the first few days. I didn't see much in religious sects, my community feelings went no further than Consumers'

Association and I could live without gurus. I had seen too many wandering Europeans in India who had allowed themselves to be initiated into the mysteries, for the price of several hundred dollars. The deeper meanings of these escaped me, except for the not-so-mysterious fact that the follower grew poorer while the guru grew richer.

"I didn't really believe that there were still true masters. And if they did indeed exist, they wouldn't display themselves so obviously as Bhagwan Rajneesh. I did find him puzzling, for everything I had heard and read about him had gone straight to my heart. I also found the atmosphere in the ashram a bit overwhelming. I saw lots of people embracing, crying, dancing, and I wasn't so physically open myself.

"...It is difficult to describe my first sight of him as he entered with hands folded in the traditional namaste greeting. You could say I was directly hypnotized. Tears came to my eyes quite spontaneously. I was confused because something was happening to me over which I had no control and that seldom has happened to me.

"The English lectures literally shattered me. He didn't proclaim any revolutionary novelties, yet he did bring me into contact with things which

had been slumbering inside me – a sort of unnerving recognition. The most important thing was that I was immediately convinced that there sat someone, on his white chair, who was speaking from his own experience. My prejudices disappeared” (*Panorama Magazine*, October 13, 1978).

Jean Lyell reported a similar experience in *Vogue Magazine* (September 15, 1977). She wrote: “I have just visited this remarkable ashram to see for myself. Brought up in the firm faith of the Scots Church I had many questions to ask, many reservations to overcome; but, having listened for twelve days to Bhagwan’s incomparable discourses, all uncertainties have now vanished.... To me everything he said in his philosophy of life had the unmistakable ring of truth: a new experience.”

Thus, Bhagwan’s fame grew, and with it the controversy he inevitably occasioned. As Ronald Conway put it: “Not for Rajneesh a time-honored, patient turning of the other cheek. While he can speak of divine and earthly love in ways which would melt the heart, he can also slash at politicians, orthodox churches, theologians and admired public figures with a reckless ferocity which can alarm even his most devoted hearers. Rajneesh has been both praised and defended on the floor of the Indian Parliament. The press of West Germany is humming with controversy about him, since Germans now make up the largest national contingent in the ashram” (*The Weekend Australian*, February 14-15, 1981).

Conway quoted one Indian follower of Bhagwan as saying: “Because he can see so much further than anyone else, Bhagwan knows he will be misunderstood no matter what he says. So he talks about our absurd and dangerous world precisely as he sees it, like it or lump it. He simply attempts to cancel out all the old religious categories and he’s merciless toward the slightest hint of hypocrisy or quibbling pompousness.”

Among other things, Bhagwan was merciless about society’s double standard for sex, and his ‘audacious’ observation that sexual repression resulted in sexual obsession outraged the conservative Indian press. It was probably the first time those three letters of the alphabet had appeared next to each other on their pages. Overcoming their distaste for the subject with ungainly haste, Indian journalists quickly coined the phrase “Sex Guru,” and proceeded to churn out appropriately sordid stories. Ironically, as Ronald Clarke says, Rajneesh’s goal was actually “to guide his followers to redirect their sexual energy toward spiritual fulfillment, toward transcendence of sex” (*Report to the Oregon Committee for Human Rights*, September 27, 1983). In fact, of the over 400 published books by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, only one has “sex” in the title – *From Sex To Superconsciousness*. Yet the designation “Sex Guru” persists to this day.

Most of the rumors which still follow him – flogged relentlessly by the yellow press – originate from this time. And most of them had no foundation in truth. But it was easier, and more palatable to conservative readers (and sold more copies), to print sensational stories than to try to explain the phenomenon that was happening. Only the professionals attempted it.

Bernard Levin reported (in *The London Times*, April 1980) that “There are the usual tales of dark doings, with hints of sexual impropriety, that such movements invariably attract; there are equally inevitable allegations of drug use, no doubt because long hair among young people (the overwhelming majority of Rajneesh’s followers are young) is always associated, in popular mythology, with drugs. And of course, these allegations have been picked up, embellished and printed in the West. Yet even a brief visit to the Rajneesh headquarters is sufficient to dispel such beliefs. The gossip conveys more about the gossipers than about the subject of the gossip – as indeed is commonly the case – and in this instance it conveys something of very considerable significance.”

Levin went on to explain that “the hostility this remarkable teacher has attracted is not surprising. For Rajneesh is, beyond any doubt, a deeply disturbing influence. At the end of the path that leads towards the discourse auditorium (which is called Buddha Hall) there is a sign reading *Shoes and minds to be left here*. The shoes present no problem; but every instinct of Man revolts, screaming, against the second provision. And yet it does not require years of meditation to recognize that all the most forceful achievements and influences that affect human beings bypass the mind altogether to have their effect; art, faith, sleep, joy, death, hate, laughter, fear – none of these can be understood in terms of the mind, nor are the workings of any of them understood by the mind. And, of course, there is one more such area in human beings that does not depend on the mind for its existence, and cannot look to the mind for an explanation: love.

“That is the business of Rajneesh, as it was the business of Christ, and Buddha and Lao Tzu and all the other Enlightened Masters who have borne witness through the centuries to the same two principles: that love is the force that through the green fuse drives the flower, and that everything we need to be, we already are, wish to be and ought to be, we already are. Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Or, as Rajneesh puts it: *My message is: Drop the mind and you will become available to God. Become innocent and you will be bridged with God. Drop this idea that you are somebody special. Be ordinary and you will become extraordinary. Be true to your inner being and all religions are fulfilled. And*

when you don't have a mind, then you have a heart. When you are not in the mind only then your heart starts pulsating, then you have love. No-mind means love. Love is my message.' Or as he puts it more succinctly: 'Everybody is born perfect with the signature of God: imperfection is a learnt thing.'"

The disturbing influence of Poona was not confined to Bhagwan's discourses. As Alan Atkinson said in his 1981 *Saturday Review* (*The Advertiser*, August 1, 1981) analysis of the ashram, "One of the most astonishing aspects of the Rajneesh phenomenon was the psychotherapy groups set up by him with top psychologists and psychotherapists from all over the world. The groups, for the purpose of 'clearing the mind,' used the widest range of 'consciousness-expanding' techniques taught in both the West and East."

The boldness of this experiment captivated the press. *Re Nudo Magazine* (Italy) reported in July 1978: "Today for the thousands of Western therapists – Reichian or Jungian, followers of the humanistic psychology, American, English, German, friends and colleagues of Rogers, Laing, Janov – Poona has become more a reality than a symbol: it is the greatest center of psychoanalytic therapy in the world. Every month in Poona, or to be more precise at the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh Ashram, 40 or 50 encounter groups are held. And that means that in 1977, 10,000 people have gone through them. The group leaders, all Westerners, number about 50 and work full time in the ashram... What impressed me most during my first visit was that all these therapists – well-known, the avant-garde in their own countries – had left their professions and their riches to work in the ashram where they receive two meals a day, a bed, a free-pass for Bhagwan's discourses and nothing else."

Bernard Levin noted: "The wide range of consciousness-expanding therapeutic techniques practiced there (they include Massage, Reflexology, Alexander technique, Acupuncture, Rolfing, Postural Integration, Hypnosis, Counseling, Rebirthing, Dynamic Meditation and many others) are of the greatest value for the growth towards wholeness of those who shop at this amazing spiritual supermarket" (*The London Times*, April 8, 1980). Ronald Conway wrote "The many active techniques taught there have nothing to do with contemplating either egos or navels. A Dutch psychiatrist told me that many of his visiting conferees believed that the ashram now contained possibly the finest group psychotherapy center in the world. Many of the center's leaders have been trained in New York, London, Munich and California. Many are fully qualified physicians or psychologists hidden beneath the relative

anonymity of their sannyas (Sanskrit) names. Rajneesh was admitted even by professionally trained Western skeptics to be one of the most brilliant natural psychologists and therapeutic innovators" (*The Weekend Australian*, February 14-15, 1981).

Marcel Meier took part in some of the groups in 1978. He wrote: "It is difficult to describe exactly what happened in these groups. Broadly, we often had tough confrontations with aspects of ourselves which had not been touched upon before. I did things which I had never dreamed of doing before in my everyday life. Sometimes I approached an insight into hell, sometimes it was seventh heaven. Sometimes I saw people undergoing great changes. The therapists must be among the most able in the world. They are themselves sannyasins, which among other things, means that they give their service for nothing. About 20 different methods, including gestalt, encounter therapy, bio-energy, screaming and hypnosis therapy, psychodrama, Eastern techniques such as Zen meditation, yoga, Tai Chi, and Buddhist and Hindi meditation techniques, are used to make the participant aware of the reality of everything except his ego, his personality. The group therapy made the strongest impression. In psychological circles, Poona has become known as the most important 'growth center' in the world" (*Panorama Magazine*, October 13, 1978).

The meditation techniques referred to were developed by Bhagwan specifically for the modern man. They were adapted from ancient practices of many different schools of mysticism. "In those meditations the ashram truly brings about a change of consciousness," wrote Andreas Uhlig in *Neue Zurcher Zeitung* (Switzerland, July 18-19, 1981). Uhlig, who visited the ashram in May of 1981 with a group of diplomats from Delhi, attributed the difference he observed between sannyasins and others to Bhagwan's "psychology of the buddha," the therapy groups and the meditations. He concluded, "In Rajneesh's precinct there is really something exceptional happening: individuals are being liberated, that is, deconditioned from all restrictions and social constraints."

Maurice Roy summed up for readers of the Canadian *Chatelaine Magazine* in January, 1981: "The ashram in Poona actually appears as one of the most audacious and fruitful attempts of mixing thousand-year-old Eastern traditions with modern Western techniques.... It is, at the same time a meditation center, a place for celebration and a vast laboratory where new techniques for the exploration of consciousness are devised."

What did it all add up to?

Certainly, out of context, sex, hypnosis, screaming encounter groups and wild ecstatic meditations gave the yellow press plenty of ammunition

to build controversial if not alarming pictures of Bhagwan and his ashram. But what was the ashram really like?

Those who chose to investigate it themselves, rather than simply rewrite the scandal sheets, painted a surprisingly utopian picture. Many, like Levin, judged the ashram by the people who had chosen to live there with Bhagwan: "If it is true, and I cannot see how it could not be, that a tree must be known by its fruit, the followers – he calls them neo-sannyasins – of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh are in general an exceptionally fine crop bearing witness to a tree of a choice rare nature. The first quality a visitor to Rajneesh's ashram notices – and he never ceases to notice it – is the ease and comfort with which they wear their faith. Though they are unshakably convinced (I met only one with any residual doubts) that Rajneesh has enabled them to find a meaning to their lives and for their place in the universe, there was no trace of fanaticism in them, and in most not even fervor" (*The London Times*, April 10, 1980).

Alan Atkinson used a similar yardstick: "The development of the Poona technique of Western psychotherapeutic methods combined with meditation appears to be unique – and shows that, whatever one might think of Rajneesh, he certainly has, at least, some special flair for attracting people of all ages from all walks of life. It is in the type of people whom Rajneesh has attracted to Poona that reveals how far the ashram appears to have been from just another soul-sop or haven from the world for disillusioned youth or aging hippies. Some of the most ardent disciples and co-workers in the Rajneesh movement are doctors, teachers, former clergymen" (*The Advertiser [Saturday Review]*, August 1, 1981). John Fry reported that: "An abnormally high percentage of sannyasins were successful people before they had ever heard of Bhagwan. They were successful professionally, artistically and academically. They already had made it" (*Frying Pan Magazine*, June, 1983).

The ashram was described by Atkinson as "a highly energetic and joyful place with days full of music, dancing and singing, as well as a wide variety of skilled arts and craftwork" (*The Advertiser [Saturday Review]*, August 1, 1981). Ronald Conway reported that "there were in the ashram twenty-three doctors, a fair number of dentists, plumbers, painters, mechanics of all kinds, carpenters, printers, interior decorators, chefs, bookbinders, tailors, and even soap-makers. The ashram had its own fully staffed hospital, workshops, canteen, post-office and general store. Its facilities were spotless in a country where dirt and infection are endemic" (*The Weekend Australian*, February 14-15, 1981).

Even the Indian press reported favorably about the ashramites: "The

sannyasins were some of the most brilliant people from all over the world," said the *Indian Daily* on June 6, 1981. "There were members from the Royal Dramatic Academy, leading figures from the world of art, cinema and music, and even some technologists from the highly sophisticated West. The Rajneesh group had class, whatever people from Poona may say. They brought glitter, glamour and grace to this town in their own kinky way. The Rajneesh Ashram had some of the best talent under one roof any institution could boast of. The Rajneesh Theater groups brought some of the best dramatic arts to the Bombay stage. Their musical members had a better grasp of modern Western music, especially jazz and blues. Among some of the more creative arts, the Rajneesh Ashram had some of the best horticulturists and hydroponic experts. Soaps and other toiletry articles were being made too, at the ashram workshops."

Bernard Levin concluded: "The workshops are extensive and impressive; these are no fumbling amateurs messing about with batik and linocuts, but serious craftsmen turning out furniture, metalware, silver inlaying, screen-printing and the like, of high quality. But the point is that almost all of them started without any skill at these trades. The further point is that they are all obviously happy in their work. I have heard the sannyasins' temporary sojourn at the ashram (many come for a month or so at a time, often using their annual leave for the purpose) described as a holiday; if so, it is a holiday with remarkable therapeutic qualities, for I met no one who did not testify to the gains the experience had brought, and none who lacked the visible sign of such gains" (*The London Times*, April 10, 1980).

Dangerous?

Would you want the man responsible for all that in your country?

CHAPTER
FOUR

THE DANGER
ERUPTS IN AMERICA
(1981 – 1985)

The Americans, it seemed, did not. Having allowed him into the country in 1981 for medical reasons (the officer who authorized his tourist visa was subsequently reported 'transferred'), they did everything in their power to get rid of him.

His application for permanent residence was denied – the US government refused to accept that he was a religious teacher, which would have qualified him for residence. Following a barrage of protests from religious and other professionals around the world (see Chapter Five), the government rescinded its decision, but then refused to adjudicate his application.

Instead it initiated one of the most intensive investigations ever conducted against one man. In retrospect it seems that almost every government department was involved – Internal Revenue Service, Immigration, Criminal Investigation (the Attorney General), Customs and Excise, and Health, Education and Welfare. As the US Attorney for Oregon put it at a press conference in 1986, "Our first priority was to get rid of Bhagwan and dissolve the commune."

The press noticed. "There was no stopping the Attorney General, the Governor, the Immigration Service," wrote Oregon journalist Dell Murphy in her book *The Rajneesh Story* (Publisher: Linwood Press, Oregon), "...nothing would stop them until the commune was destroyed. Most of all, they wanted to destroy the Bhagwan, this non-Christian, non-Jewish, non-rancher, who rode around in a Rolls Royce and wore funny clothes. They would have liked to see him dead. And they might have succeeded if his followers hadn't stepped in in time to rescue him." *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, one of Germany's leading national dailies, reported in November, 1985, "The goal of the American authorities seems to be to crush the commune, no matter what the cost" (Marianne Heuwagen, November 4, 1985).

The government succeeded the same month, when Bhagwan was deported after deciding not to contest two charges of immigration offenses

(See footnote to Chapter One). 'Immigration offenses' was the sum total of the government's very expensive four-year investigation. It did not escape the attention of the press that "thousands of people living in America were 'guilty' of the same violations" – *La Domenica del Corriere*, Italy. "If the federal government rounded up everyone whose marriage was a sham," wrote Joel McNally in *The Milwaukee Journal*, "it would have to convert stadiums into prisons like they do in South America" (October 31, 1985).

Bhagwan was arrested at gun-point (twelve loaded rifles to be exact) in North Carolina. He was kept in jail for twelve days before being released on bail. Pictures taken during those days show him with handcuffs on his wrists, and chains around his waist and feet. He was strip-searched. The flowing robe he always wore was confiscated and he was issued prison pants and shirt. Oregon journalist Dell Murphy described the scene of Bhagwan "still in shackles, walking erect and proud as he made his way painfully – it must have been painful – up the steep ramp to the plane that carried him out of North Carolina. He couldn't use the handrails because his wrists were in handcuffs. And nobody offered to take his arm or help him. This frail man was, after all," she wrote, "a danger to society."

Even those who had been against him were shocked. *Suddeutsche Zeitung* (December 4, 1985) asked: "The Immigration Service seems to think of sannyasins as highly dangerous criminals. How else to explain why this small group of travelers were arrested in North Carolina and brought before the magistrate in Charlotte chained to each other like cattle?"

The *Albany Democrat-Herald* (Albany was one of the Oregon towns which formed a vigilante committee against Bhagwan and his sannyasins), wrote in its editorial (October 31, 1985): "Nobody here has any particular reason to feel sorry for Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. But the seemingly gleeful accounts in the press of this man's arrest and subsequent troubles bring up some hitherto unasked questions. His numerous critics – pleased at how this self-proclaimed man of importance was brought down to the humbling experience of sharing a common jail cell – must have chuckled at his complaints about having to sleep on a steel bench without pillows or blankets, and about having to breathe the cigarette smoke from his incessantly smoking cellmates. It's a federal crime, apparently, to marry someone in order to gain legal status as a resident alien. That's what the guru is accused of promoting among his followers, although he denies it. In any case, such marriages of convenience are not exactly unheard of. The courts in Oregon and North Carolina, along with various prosecutorial

agencies and platoons of lawyers, now have rumbled into motion in this case, bringing the majesty of the federal government to bear on this character. If they're not careful, if they don't restrain themselves and their heavy-handed ways, they'll turn this man into a martyr."

The Reverend Farley Maxwell, writing in *The Vancouver Columbian* (December 8, 1985), called the arrest "another victory for fear, doubt and prejudice. What can Christians learn from this experience?" he asked. "After almost 2000 years of preaching the gospel of love, trust and generosity we can see some of the same primal forces that put Jesus on the cross. People were threatened. They responded with emotions of fear, doubt and prejudice. The established leadership used the laws and order of today to rid the land of the uninvited, unwelcomed presence. Did the gospel make us less efficient or more tolerant? It took the Roman-Jewish leadership three years to get Jesus, and it took modern Oregonians four years to get Rajneesh. Maybe that is the measurable result of 2000 years of preaching love, trust and generosity – a 25 percent decrease in the efficiency of law and order or increase in tolerance."

Bhagwan's followers and friends, aghast at the government's treatment and concerned about his health (he suffered from diabetes, allergic asthma and a chronic back condition), persuaded Bhagwan to accept a deal offered by the US government whereby if he promised to leave the country immediately he could plead to two charges and avoid a long drawnout trial. This strange type of plea bargaining is commonly used in America to save the government the time and expense of a trial. In the 'Alfred plea' filed by Bhagwan, he acknowledged that the government had evidence with which it may have been able to convince a jury that he had come to America intending to stay permanently, and that he had condoned sham marriages, but at the same time he maintained his innocence. He was fined and prohibited from returning to America for five years.

Why? What had precipitated that huge government campaign against one man?

What had he done in those four and a half years in America?

For a start, he was in public silence and seclusion for the first four years. He gave no discourses at all. During that time he lived on a huge ranch (126 square miles) in the central Oregon desert which had been purchased by some of his followers. The ranch was very isolated – the nearest town was twenty miles away. However, as news of his presence spread, even though he had 'retired' and was not speaking, hundreds of his followers from all over the world began arriving.

A small city was created on the ranch to accommodate them, and

within four years almost 6,000 people were living there. The city was built from scratch by his followers, and was a source of amazement to all who visited: "Deep in the dusty mountain range country made famous by John Wayne's cowboy movie, 'Rooster Cogburn,' they labor as few of us would believe and even fewer would tolerate. Twelve hours a day, seven days a week, they're at it - turning near desert into an oasis which is a credit to human endeavor," wrote Howard Sattler in the *West Australian Sunday Times* on July 28, 1985. He continued, "In four years, they've turned valleys on their 310 sq. km. Rancho Rajneesh from dead brown to flourishing green. They run the healthiest herd of dairy cattle in the district, produce scores of vegetable varieties to feed up to 15,000 people at a time, and from a new vineyard, they are on the brink of standing their first bottle of home-made wine. Bhagwan's people have their own travel agency, the fourth largest bus fleet in the State of Oregon, and a four-aircraft airline. They produce a weekly newspaper and have a heavily armed 'peace force' to protect citizens."

John Fry, who visited the ranch in the first part of 1983, less than two years after it was purchased, described the construction activity, and the financial investment involved: "Everywhere we looked there were new buildings going up, big D-9 Cat tractors widening roads, trucks, cranes, a gravel-crusher, concrete mixers, compressed air-drilling machines for blasting, new jeeps, great double thirty-foot trailers, dozens of clever little A-frames, and the beginnings of a tent city, half the size of Brooklyn it looked like, where fifteen thousand people will be accommodated this July when Rajneeshes come from all over the world for the Second Annual World Celebration. Later we saw the other dam, the dairy, the methane generator under construction, the chicken yard with its clever anti-predator measures, the cafeteria with big water-heated solar panels and a full-swing bakery, the truck garden which produced \$80,000 worth of vegetables last year and will maybe double that figure this year, the plant nursery and such. And we saw these marvels in the same spirit of astonishment. Just by standing still and not looking around it was obvious these people had sunk \$20-\$30 million in the place already and had only begun. If we had looked around and seen their computers, and what they had on the drawing boards, the figure would be doubled." He concluded, "Not only is there a lot of sheer brilliant talent being exercised all the time at Rajneesh communal efforts, there is also a lot of money" (*Frying Pan Magazine*, June 1981).

Reporters were particularly captivated by the environmental policies instituted at the ranch: "The sannyasins do everything to make the most of

the soil, and even their critics acknowledge this with praise. They have built irrigation systems allowing for maximum use of recycled water. They use natural sewage treatment plants and recycle 70 per cent of the waste. They have created a paradise for environmentalists," wrote Marianne Heuwagen in the German daily national *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on November 4, 1985.

Kirk Braun, an Oregon columnist, prophesied: "It is possible that somewhere down the line, environmentalists will look upon Rajneeshpuram as a model for living in harmony with the environment."

Australia's *POL* magazine discussed the philosophy behind the planning.

It began by quoting one of the ranch founders: "Our desire is to create a shrine worthy of Bhagwan while he's still with us. The work we're doing here is a united effort to create a beautiful oasis, material and spiritual." *POL* reported that: "Within two years Bhagwan's disciples transformed the ranch into a multi-dimensional farming community, building roads, prefabricated homes, storage buildings, electricity and water supplies, sewage disposal systems, a dairy unit, and using the latest farm machinery. A herd of Holstein cows provides the community with milk, butter, cheese and yogurt. The commune's six-acre chicken farm provides eggs for the community, the hens fed with recycled waste food from the dining rooms. Much of the ranch's rangeland was suited to sheep and cattle, but massive overgrazing during the past 50 years destroyed the soil, grasses, waterways, and wildlife. One of the first projects was a rangeland reclamation program to stop erosion, slow down the run-off rain-water and encourage grasses back to the barren hills. The commune quickly developed a 50-acre truck farm which now grows almost all their vegetables and began a dry-land program on the ranch's uplands that yields wheat, barley, oats, rye and legumes. They also keep bees for honey and even boast a vineyard."

POL quotes the city's mayor as saying: "The city's development will remain in harmony with nature, illustrating that it is possible for people to live in a beneficial co-existence with the ecology on which we all depend for our well-being." The magazine continued, "As Bhagwan once put it: '*Ecology means thinking about the whole, the interdependent cycle of things in existence. Everything depends on everything else: nothing is absolutely independent or can be. We are parts, very small parts, cogs in a wheel. Somebody had to know about the whole wheel.*' But this vision of ecology doesn't decry modern technology - '*The way to regain the balance of nature is not by renouncing technology,*' he said. '*It's not by becoming*

hippies – no, not at all. The way to regain the balance of nature is through superior technology, higher technology. I am all for science. The outer world can be transformed totally. We can bring an even better ecological balance than nature itself. Man is nature's highest peak; it's through man that nature can resettle its own problems."

POL noted that "Bhagwan also makes a sharp distinction between the communal lifestyle embraced by his disciples and the communism of Karl Marx.

Bhagwan's vision doesn't fit the traditional spiritual teaching of Indian holy men. He doesn't preach renunciation, celibacy, discipline or asceticism. His message is that the meditator must learn to live in the midst of the world and all its materialism, learning the art of non-attachment. 'Meditation in the marketplace' is how his disciples describe his approach to meditation.

"The new city of Rajneeshpuram is an ideal place to put this approach into practice. It offers residents and visitors several gourmet vegetarian restaurants, including Oriental and Mexican food and Italian pizzas, plus a nightclub, lounge and disco complex which allows gambling. There's also a boutique, bookstore, post office, city hall, fire station, peace force and a newly-completed shopping mall which features a jewelry store, beauty salon, deli, cinema, pharmacy and liquor store.

"Here, also, is the Rajneesh International Meditation University offering short and extended courses in meditation, spiritual therapy, and inner growth.

A health spa with jacuzzi, sauna and gym is scheduled to open soon, while recreation facilities offer hiking, canoeing, rafting, swimming, sailing, and wind-surfing."

On November 25, 1984, *The Eugene Register-Guard* documented some statistics about the ranch, showing that it "...represents a \$110 million investment. The city's infrastructure includes a 90-foot high earthen dam and 35-acre reservoir, an electric power substation and underground utilities, sewer and water systems, an elaborate solid waste recycling system, a paved airport, 35 miles of roads, parks, and a lake reserved for skinny-dipping, several housing complexes and a 100-bus transit system said to be the fourth largest in Oregon."

By 1985 it had added "a 47-room first-class hotel, a medical clinic, a school, a newspaper, and forty businesses. The sannyasins had also planted more than one million trees around the city," reported *The Atlantic Monthly*. *The Eugene Register-Guard* also provided some insight into the sannyasins who were living there. It reported that they "tend to be,

according to demographic studies conducted last year by University of Oregon professors, young (average age 34), married (74 per cent), childless (75 per cent), white (91 per cent), and highly educated (64 per cent) were university graduates. 36 per cent had post-graduate degrees). Most were generally 'religious' before becoming sannyasins. Nearly 85 per cent had some prior religious affiliation (30 per cent Protestant, 27 per cent Roman Catholic and 20 per cent Jewish)." The newspaper continued: "They are not required to renounce their old beliefs. Bhagwan is seen merely as going beyond the teachings of earlier religious masters like Jesus and Buddha, who, by necessity, shaped their messages to fit their time."

As John Fry stated, "The sannyasins are supremely self-possessed, confident, relaxed and happy people. Moreover they are all, as far as I know, bright and competent. None of these dreary losers, dopers, lazy-bums, drop-outs, misfits, and dreary-eyed malcontents you can always find in, well, communes. Hell, no. This is all cream, with no dregs. And not a hippy in the whole bunch."

Ted Shay, Professor of Political Science at Willamette University, Oregon, summed it up in 1983: "Bhagwan has attracted to his teachings some of the best educated minds of Western Europe and the US."

The US government was not, however, impressed. It challenged the legality of the city in court, arguing that it violated laws about the separation of church and state. While the lawsuit was pending, a process of several years, government services to the City Corporation were suspended.

Some local ranchers, mostly devout Christians, were also upset about the "foreigner with his strange religion" who had moved into their territory. They formed vigilance-type committees and drove around in cars displaying rifles and bumper stickers which read "Better Dead Than Red" (sannyasins had become known as "the reds" because of the color of their clothing). They distributed T-shirts and baseball caps depicting rifle-sights trained on Bhagwan's face. They organized meetings at which Bible-thumping preachers shouted dire warnings about the Satanists and devil worshippers who lived at the ranch. And they circulated petitions urging the government to send Bhagwan and the followers of "his alien cult" back to their own country (quite ignoring the fact that well over half the ranch residents were American citizens).

Ronald O. Clarke, Professor of Religion for more than twenty years at Oregon State University, spent the summer of 1983 studying the situation under a grant from the Oregon Committee for the Humanities. In his 31-page report to the Committee he noted that "the followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh have been subjected to an anti-cult hysteria since coming

to Oregon, mostly caused by fundamentalist Christians who strongly objected to the presence of another religion in their midst." He added that their hysteria posed a much more serious threat than Rajneeshism, which he viewed as an "emerging religion" – "Anyone at all familiar with Eastern religious traditions would immediately recognize Rajneeshism as a religion," he said.

Clarke said persons attempting to discredit the sect through what he termed "misrepresentation and guilt by association" could seriously jeopardize traditional American guarantees of religious freedom. "I've heard some incredible rumors about Rajneeshpuram," he said, describing such rumor-mongering about new faiths as an ancient tradition. He noted that the word 'cult' was a precise term used to describe relatively new, small movements that deviate substantially from mainstream religious beliefs. "According to the definition, early Christianity in Roman society was a cult," he said.

Clarke, a former ordained Christian minister, said that early Christians were considered atheists by Romans because they refused to burn incense to the emperors. They also were rumored to be indulging in sex orgies (a rumor commonly associated with the followers of Bhagwan) and cannibalism because they attended "love feasts" and participated in ceremonies in which they "ate someone's body and drank someone's blood." Clarke concluded, "This history ought to cause us some pause... We live in a shrinking planet and have to come to grips with spiritual pluralism. There are things of value in many religious traditions. The Bhagwan is a mystic, and he is dealing with spiritual matters as understood in the East. I would hope that the bloody religious wars of the past are over."

Unfortunately he was paid scant heed. The US government, which was led by the staunch Christian Ronald Reagan, and the Attorney General's office led by the even more fervent Christian Edward Meese, continued their persecution, culminating in Bhagwan's dramatic arrest and deportation in November 1985 for 'immigration offenses.'

CHAPTER
FIVE

PEER JUDGMENT –
A DANGEROUS
ASSESSMENT

The US government's decision in 1983 that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was not a religious teacher touched off a storm of protest from religious and other professionals around the world. Scholars from every Christian denomination (Catholic, Baptist, Church of England, Presbyterian, Quaker, Lutheran, and Orthodox), Jewish Rabbis, Zen temple priests, Buddhist scholars and professors of religion from all over the world wrote in his favor. So too did major figures from the worlds of science, medicine, psychology, sociology, business and the arts.

Their message was perhaps best summed up by the well-known American poet, author and movie-maker, James Broughton. He wrote: "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is one of the most extraordinary men of these last decades of this century. He is a teacher and author of exceptional abilities, having brought into the history and understanding of religion a fertile new insight and illumination. I am convinced that in the spiritual tradition here is a mind of intellectual brilliance and persuasive ability as an author. He has given me new comprehensions of Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, Sufi, and Hindu teachings, mystical practice, and historical significance. It is Bhagwan's special talent that he helps one to a deeper awareness of all religious experience in a manner that is both necessary and appropriate to present day society. I believe him to be a major force for religious consciousness in our time."

An interesting fact the letters reveal is that the authors, professionals from many varied fields, each considered Bhagwan to be an expert in their own field. Psychologists called him "the most outstanding teacher in psychology in the world today" – Dr. Rudolph Wormser, Professor at the Max Planck Institut für Psychopathologie & Psychotherapie, Germany, chairman, 17th Congress of Experimental Psychology; and – "an extraordinarily gifted psychologist" – Dr. James S. Gordon, Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Community and Family Medicine at the Georgetown University Medical School in Washington, DC., USA.

From the normally insular world of religion, religious figures were unanimous in acknowledging Bhagwan with high praise. One reason for this rare display of generosity may have been that Bhagwan was not seen to espouse any one particular religion. "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is a scholar of many religious views, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, and Christianity. He has not only studied the religions of the world but perceived and been able to communicate the spirit or inner essence of them all. While his roots remain in the East, he is not seeking to promote the dominance of any one religion over others," wrote Paul F. Knitter, Professor of Theology at Xavier University, Cincinnati, USA. Bhagwan did, however, vociferously and uncompromisingly attack all organized religions. That makes the following testimonials, almost all of which are from representatives of organized religions, even more startling.

Gregorio, the Archimandrite of Turin, called him "a master who opens the Age of Aquarius." "He is a great religious master of our age," wrote the National President of the Venerable Permanent Counsel of the Orthodox Church of Italy. Others described him as follows: "the rarest and most talented religionist to appear in this century" – Professor Kazuyoshi Kino of Hosen Gakuen College, Tokyo, a Buddhist scholar for thirty years; "one of the most outstanding religious figures of all time" – James R. Agee, member of the Lutheran clergy for ten years; "one of the great living teachers in the world" – Daniel Matt, Ph.D., Professor of Judaic Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, California; "a religious teacher and spiritual leader of exceptional ability" – Dr. Hans-Jurgen Greschat, Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Marburg, Germany; "a uniquely brilliant spiritual teacher" – Maurice R. Stein, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, Brandeis University, Massachusetts; "one of the great lights of this century" – Rabbi Joseph H. Gelberman, The Tree of Life Synagogue, New York; "one of the most outstanding and enlightened religious leaders in our time" – Rev. Frank Stribbling, Pastor, Sanctuary of Light Church, Texas; "a rare addition to the teaching corps of the world religions" – Douglas V. Steers, T. Wistar Brown Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Haverford College, Pennsylvania, author of a dozen books on philosophy and religion, and former President of the American Theological Society and Chairman of the Friends World Committee, the international body of the Quakers.

From the arts came the following praise for Bhagwan: "an artist of exceptional vision" – Bruno DeMattio, German artist and author of *The Software Culture is Coming* and *Jenseits der Wüste*; "a master artist" –

Perinchery Bhaskaran Unny, Germany, film maker and actor; "an exceptional artist of words" – Samuel Schapiro, film-maker, winner of the Bronze Lion award at the Cannes Film Festival.

A professor of international business at the School of International Politics, Economics and Business, Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, described Bhagwan simply as "a truly universal genius."

From the world of science he was described by Dr. M.W. Ronsberg, Professor of General Medicine and Sociology in Medicine at the Freie Universitat, Berlin, as "undoubtedly an extraordinary philosopher and scientist." A Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Oklahoma, USA, even went so far as to pronounce him "without doubt the foremost general systems engineer alive today." The professor, Darrel Harden, Ph.D., described systems theory as the relatedness of energy events – "a shot fired here is heard around the world." He agreed that "using writings of an Indian mystic and religious leader to support my engineering activities may seem strange, but," he said, "history shows all good engineering came from men with visions of the relatedness of nature and the physical world. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's knowledge of relatedness is a fertile field of ideas."

As Ted L. Shay, Professor of Political Science at Willamette University, Oregon, summed up, "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is obviously one of the world's most exceptional men."

What was the basis for such eulogies from men trained to use their critical faculties? The letters provide a variety of explanations. Professor O. A. Bushnell, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Medical Microbiology and Tropical Medicine and History of Medicine at the University of Hawaii, explained why he described Bhagwan as "the foremost philosopher and spiritual leader alive today." He wrote: "His discourses cover, interpret, and enliven aspects of Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Zen. His books explain the meaning of existence in contemporary times. His commentary and analysis illuminate the great philosophical traditions of Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Pythagoras, and scientists like Albert Einstein from the West, and Confucius, Lao Tzu and Buddha from the East.

"In modern times, particularly in Western societies, materialism, the fast pace of life, transiency of relationship and widespread litigation have become a part of daily existence. The technological advances in fields such as nuclear energy and biomedicine have made our lives comfortable, but have also created unforeseen problems such as the threat of nuclear holocaust, keeping people alive on machines, etc., thus creating anxiety

and making our daily life uncomfortable. In such trying times the books of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh bring a fresh perspective to the meaning of life and the condition of modern man. He provides the awareness of the realities of the spiritual world, and brings contentment and peace of mind to the individual."

Bushnell added that "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh has made a significant contribution to the letters and sciences and we are glad to have discovered him. He has greatly enriched our lives and our work, as well as that of our contemporaries."

Psychologists referred to the unique contribution to their world of Bhagwan's "psychology of the buddhas," or "the third psychology." Nigel D. W. Armistead, Ph.D., author of *Reconstructing Social Psychiatry* and former Lecturer in Social Psychiatry at the University of Sheffield, UK, wrote: "In his religious discourses, all of which have been published in book form, he has shown an insight into the working of the human mind far deeper than most professionals that I have met in my career. He has an intimate knowledge of Western psychology, whether of the psychoanalytic, behavioristic or humanistic schools, and has himself propounded at length his own psychology of the buddhas, which transcends all of these (see particularly *The Discipline of Transcendence* in four volumes, *The Book of the Books* in six volumes, and *Philosophia Perennis* in two volumes). He has also shown an exceptional ability as a practicing psychologist in his dealings with visitors and disciples who bring their problems to him. The record of these interviews is also published in book form and bears witness to his psychological insight and skill as a therapist. His ability in this area is simply greater than any persons I have come across in the last twenty years that I have been involved with psychology."

Dr. Rudolph Wormser, Professor at the Max Planck Institut für Psychopathologie & Psychotherapie, compared Bhagwan's contribution to psychology with Einstein's contribution to physics: "The teachings of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in the field of psychology not only meet the standards of modern scientific psychology, but go much further and surpass anything else available in the world. Not only does he understand profoundly all the existing schools of scientific psychology, e.g. behaviorism, psychoanalysis, gestalt psychology, all of which he resumes in a comprehensive view, but also he founded a new kind of psychology called 'the third psychology.' To understand the progress and change the subject of scientific psychology has gone through by the teachings of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, it can only be compared to the progress physics has gone through by the work of Albert Einstein, or the theory of

scientific psychology, but go much further and surpass anything else available in the world. Not only does he understand profoundly all the existing schools of scientific psychology, e.g. behaviorism, psychoanalysis, gestalt psychology, all of which he resumes in a comprehensive view, but also he founded a new kind of psychology called 'the third psychology.' To understand the progress and change the subject of scientific psychology has gone through by the teachings of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, it can only be compared to the progress physics has gone through by the work of Albert Einstein, or the theory of scientific measurement changed through Werner Heisenberg's discovery of the principle of indeterminism." Dr. Ronsberg of the Freie Universitat, Berlin, on the other hand compared Bhagwan and his work with Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the anthroposophical theory.

Guy L. Claxton, M.A. (Camb), D. Phil. (Oxon), Lecturer in Psychology of Education at the University of London, considered Bhagwan "the most important and successful teacher in the domain of experience and debate that lies at the intersection of psychology, psychotherapy, philosophy and religion." Mr. Claxton, author of *The Little Ed Book*, *Cognitive Psychology: New Directions*, *Wholly Human: Western and Eastern Visions of the Self and its Perfections*, and *Live and Learn: Growth and Change in Everyday Life*, explained: "Through his taped lectures, his books, and most importantly through the experimental methods, syntheses of ancient meditational and modern psychotherapeutic techniques that he has devised and that are conducted under his guidance, he succeeds, often to an astonishing extent, in increasing the intelligence, compassion, clarity and power of those who are drawn to him. His appeal, his integrity and his grasp, both practical and theoretical, of the psychology of modern man, make him unique amongst 'spiritual' teachers."

Many psychologists commented on Bhagwan's effectiveness in dealing with the modern problem of alienation; J.R. Newbrough, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Education at Vanderbilt University, USA, noted that "the work of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is one of the important sources of ideas and inspiration for the revitalization of the US. We have, at the community level, lost much of the sense of community. There is considerable conflict without it being effectively resolved, leaving fragmented groups unable to work together efficiently. There is a loss of worth in a higher moral order. I see the Rajneesh work as contributing to all of these points."

Counselor Friedemann Haworka, an Australian youth-worker and former Baptist minister, wrote: "The absolute uniqueness of Bhagwan

Shree Rajneesh's teachings is in the fact and way he brings back the long-lost dimension of meditation and spirituality to the Western everyday life; he takes the Western scientific mind and succeeds in opening it to the spiritual. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is the answer to the modern neurosis as described by Victor E. Frankel – man searching desperately and most futilely for meaning in humanity in this sterile scientific materialist world."

John H. Crook, Ph.D., Reader in Psychology at the University of Bristol, UK, noting that Bhagwan had written innumerable religious books "of an outstanding and original quality," said, "He draws upon many Indian traditions in an attempt to provide an effective cure for the alienation which many individuals feel in our time."

An Australian psychiatrist Dr. John W. Harrison, author of *The Psychological Basis of Physical Disease*, wrote that he had found the writings of Rajneesh "to be at the forefront of understanding in the relationship between mind and body, the cornerstone of this work." He added that he "considered Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh to be a great scholar in the area of human relationship and personal contentment, two areas which will, in the next decade, be much pursued as the causes of physical illness."

As Professor Robert Michael March put it, Bhagwan "has cast a new light on the special psychological problems of cross-cultural communication and human development." Psychologists such as Carolyn Crane, an associate of the late Eric Berne, and Dr. Riccardo Zerbetto, Professor of Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Siena, Vice-President of the Italian Association for Humanistic Psychology, and Consultant for Drug Abuse to the Italian Ministry of Health, agreed with this assessment.

Dr. Lars A. Henriksen, Professor of Psychology and Communication at Aalborg Universitetscenter, Denmark, summed up for the psychologists: "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh offers the most complete, the most important and the most satisfying perspective on human life, compared to all contemporary teachers in philosophy, psychology and religion. His contribution to human understanding and human growth is exactly what the world of today is in desperate need of."

Letter writers from the arts felt the same about the contribution of Bhagwan to their fields. Bruno DeMattio wrote: "I see him not only as a spiritual teacher but also as an artist of exceptional vision...and what would the arts be without that vision of something greater, something more beautiful in our lives – this taste of existence which every great artist tries to express, and which humanity needs for everyone."

Ken Adams, Senior Lecturer in Sculpture at St. Martin's College of Art, London, a well-known sculptor with work exhibited at the Royal Academy and in collections in the UK, USA, Canada and Holland, explained why he described Bhagwan as "a gift to the rest of us." Rajneesh had developed, he said, "the gift of recalling to a great many people their essential humanity which is the origin of their creativity, however variously that may be expressed in different disciplines. 'Originality is the return to the origin.' That is why so many creative workers have found their way to him, in both science and art. Rajneesh," he wrote, "beautifully transcends the dichotomy between science and art. He is a ruthlessly observant psychologist speaking with the voice of a poet. His knowledge of therapeutic techniques is encyclopedic, and it is applied to the generation of a more energetic working life."

Speaking with the enigmatic brevity of a true Zen poet, Akiko Hyuga of the Japanese Arts Commendation Association, author of eleven books including *Primitive Mind*, *Pop Culturology*, and *Natural Revolution of Sex*, wrote: "The existence of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh has a great meaning. His message to Art is that Art is the same as religion. We have to go back to this basis."

The letters revealed Bhagwan's influence on the many different arts. For example: "Bhagwan's thoughts about music are among the deepest and most inspiring in contemporary musical thinking. They have influenced hundreds of modern musicians all over the world," wrote Professor H.C. Joachim-Ernst Berendt, German author of twenty-one books, and TV and film producer. He added: "From my own writings, again and again, I have experienced the authority Bhagwan enjoys in dozens of fields from philosophy and religion to art and music and modern life styles. It is hardly possible any more to write about many of these subjects without quoting Bhagwan."

From the world of theater, Rainer Artenfels, well-known Viennese actor and director, member of Max Reinhardt's *Theater in der Josefstadt*, wrote, "In India I heard him speaking about theater. It was the most profound and insightful I've ever heard on that issue, like opening new dimensions, new angles to look at." Warren Robertson, Director of the Warren Robertson Theater Workshop, New York, founder and artistic director of the Actors Repertory Theater, New York, and author of *Free to Act*, wrote that when Bhagwan's books were brought to his attention by British actor Terence Stamp, "the effect of Bhagwan's depth of knowledge and poetic insight was staggering for me. He is a truly rare and exceptional man. His insights into the arts and sciences are so fresh, original

and valuable." James Coburn, Hollywood movie star, wrote: "As an actor and as a person, I am always seeking inspiration from the great minds of our time. I came across the teachings of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh some ten years ago while traveling in India. Immediately I recognized him to be a world teacher. His incredible taped discourse lectures and books have inspired me (and millions of others) on the path of self evolution. His words and work live within me to this very day. His presence here is like a great bell tolling...awaken, awaken, awaken!"

American Award winner Jeff Gorman wrote that he "could only applaud and admire (Bhagwan's) words of universal truth and wisdom, and the poetic manner in which he expresses himself." He added that in his opinion, Bhagwan's "ability as an artist and theologian is exceptional."

Other writers: Danish award-winning author Grethe Friis, Masanori Oe and Motohiko Fuma from Japan, French-Italian novelist Jean Josipovici, Brazilian author Rose Marie Muraro, and the man who popularized Zen for the seventies' culture, American author Paul Reps, added their own eulogies.

Artist Jack W. Burnham wrote of Bhagwan's "positive influence" on his work. Himself a Professor of Art at Northwestern University, USA, he noted that Bhagwan "is a great and prolific teacher, someone whose influence on the arts will gradually be felt through the coming decades."

Other letter-writers said they considered Bhagwan important for the way he had integrated Eastern and Western philosophies and cultures. Rose Marie Muraro, Brazilian best-selling author, felt that "the integration of occidental and oriental cultures is the only factor necessary to stop the human species from perishing to greater catastrophes." Rajneesh, she said, "was essential for such integration." Felicitas D. Goodman, Ph.D., Director of the Cuyamunque Institute (USA), author and former university professor of anthropology and linguistics, also praised Bhagwan's creation of "a successful synthesis between the Eastern meditative approach and Western psychological techniques."

Claudio Lamparelli, Italian author, explained that "Rajneesh has understood that in the modern world there can no longer be any divisions and barriers, and that the future will bring about a uniform culture. Thus he walks all the different paths discovering the universal in each of them: Sufism, Vedanta, Yoga, Zen, Tantra, Buddhism, Hassidism, Taoism, apocryphal scriptures, Gurdjieff, the Greek philosophers, Western mystics and modern psychotherapists." He added that "truth is there for everybody to find, but who today would want to read the Upanishads or

the Buddhist sutras, and who could find the time to do so among the thousand and one engagements and distractions? Rajneesh," he said, "is able to explain those ancient truths in modern language, giving examples from everyday life and using clear and simple concepts. Thanks to his clarity of speech, his anecdotes, jokes and stories, he has made the traditionally dry and abstract treatises of those schools easily understandable to all. Thus," he concluded, "Rajneesh's work is of fundamental importance."

Alexandro Jodorowsky, French film director, actor and writer, concurred: "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is a man of vast culture," he wrote. "His clear concepts about philosophy and the oriental religions such as those in Japan, China, India and the Middle East are especially precious for Western students who do not have easy access to such sources."

In a similar vein other writers referred to Bhagwan's all-encompassing vision: "Never before have I encountered anybody having such a harmonious and immensely creative view encompassing art, science, human psychology and religiousness," wrote Swiss physicist and author, Dr. Arnold Schleger, Ph.D. Another scientist, Uvgustin Tuzhilin, Ph.D. in physics and mathematics from The Byelorussian Academy of Sciences, Minsk, USSR, currently Professor of Computer Science at The City University of New York, agreed.

Social scientists reported Bhagwan's contribution to their fields of behavioral science: "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is a person of truly exceptional ability in the study and interpretation of philosophy and religion, and in the application of principles of behavioral science to problems of individual adjustment, creativity, and social organization. A significant part of Bhagwan's work relates directly to self-realization, its achievement, and its effect on others. I view him as an important voice in this area; he is really internationally known for his work," wrote Rufus P. Browning, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science at San Francisco State University.

Maurice R. Stein, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University, Massachusetts, wrote: "Bhagwan has provided a brilliant and original set of materials for work in the areas of sociology of religion, social psychiatry and community sociology. His commentaries on the classic texts of the world religions are in a class by themselves as regards showing the contemporary relevance of these ancient writings. His work with his disciples as reported in the darshan diaries shows a degree of psychological insight that would make any Western psychologist feel proud. The meditations that he has devised combine catharsis with meditation in such a way as to open both the heart and the mind."

Dr. Uli Braches, Ph.D., Lecturer in Sociology, Philosophy and Pedagogics at the Johann-Wolfgang Goethe University of Frankfurt, put it in another way. "I am sure," she wrote, "that the teaching of this religious Master and the practical guidance he gives to his disciples and to whomsoever is open for it today is the most profound contribution of a man of our age to the question how we can master our lives in peace and freedom."

Hermann Wohle, Hamburg Police Commissioner (West Germany), noted that Bhagwan's teachings had "a tremendous impact on my life and occupation, which," he said, "is now much more strongly influenced by a positive vision of man." He added that "Bhagwan's exceptional abilities as a philosopher and psychologist will find significant recognition in many fields relating to human behavior."

David K. Wheaton, Ph.D., Professor of Criminal Justice at Tennessee State University, also acknowledged Bhagwan's contribution to the social behavioral sciences concluding, "I find his breadth of knowing to be of genius quality."

The reasons given by the religious professionals for their praise of Bhagwan were as diverse as the religions of the writers. Some were attracted to his teachings on Jesus: "His grasp and perception of the teachings of Jesus Christ are extraordinary and very needed by both ministers and laity of Western materialistic Christianity," wrote the Reverend Frank Stribbling. The Reverend Frederick Partington, an Anglican priest for twenty years, wrote: "I am immensely impressed by Bhagwan's range of insight and understanding. His analysis of the psychological pressures of modern society show his grasp both of depth psychology and of current existential thought. Yet his teaching of these complex issues is done with great simplicity and sensitivity. Following on from this, his originality is particularly evident in the use within his communities of the best methods of Western group therapy, alongside Eastern techniques of self-awareness and meditation. The result is, to my mind, a great enriching of our understanding of the person, and the healing of the person. Theologically I find him equally exciting. He gives to us in the West the treasures of Eastern spirituality, yet his writings on the sayings of Jesus are his fullest and most profound. But there is a synergy operating from him. He is more than just the sum of his psychological, philosophical and spiritual parts. From him there flows an energy of love and creativity which is enabling many people to find a new meaning to life, to work and to worship."

Others were attracted to his teachings on Buddhism. Professor Kazuyoshi Kino, Japan's best-known Buddhist scholar, wrote: "This

master is the rarest and most talented religionist to appear in this century. His writings about Buddhism are full of inspiration and original concepts. As a specialist in Buddhism, I have been surprised many times by his original and creative interpretations and by his unique religiousness. His interpretations are saturated with the truth of Buddhism. Even the outstanding monks that are present here in Japan cannot obtain to this level of interpretation."

R.C. Gordon-McCutchan, Ph.D., Lecturer in American Religious History at the University of California, referred to Bhagwan's teachings on tantra yoga: "By any criteria Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is one of the most important spiritual teachers in America today. He has developed programs for self-transformation that are as ingenious as they are various. He has published more than twenty books which develop and explain the ancient wisdom of tantra yoga."

Japanese Zen monks wrote with the simplicity of their philosophy: "I thank Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh for making it possible for me to accept a traditional Zen life totally," said Shinkai Tanaka, master of the Saikohzenji Zen Temple in Kameoka. "I have been deeply moved by the wonder of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh," – Kou Sugawara, head priest of Goseiji Temple, Miyagi. The Reverend Reuho Yamada, head priest of Choshoji (Zen) Temple in Beppu wrote, "Rajneesh has been making a valuable contribution to many people as a spiritual teacher. Particularly important has been the remarkable work he has already done to introduce the spirit of meditation to many young people. Among many of the remarkable achievements of Mr. Rajneesh is his ability to successfully synthesize a wide range of traditional experience and knowledge."

University theologians tended to appreciate the diversity of Bhagwan's teachings. Ronald O. Clarke, Th.D., Professor of Religious Studies at Oregon State University, wrote, "Rajneesh is a man of gifted intellect and extraordinary erudition. He exhibits an amazing command both of Eastern and Western intellectual, social, and cultural history. He has produced an impressive number of commentaries on mystical thinkers and traditions; ranging from Yoga, Vedanta, Tantrism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Zen in the East; to Greek, Christian, Jewish, and Islamic mysticism in the West. His published discourses are a source of much wisdom, insight and poetic beauty. And I regard his teachings to be a significant contribution to humanity's enduring quest for spiritual understanding, growth and fulfillment."

Rabbi Michael Ziegler of California wrote: "Rajneesh is well-respected among my colleagues as an articulate spokesman of Eastern

religious traditions and philosophies. As a religious philosopher, Bhagwan Rajneesh stands head and shoulders above most of his Asian contemporaries. Out of respect for this man's intellectual accomplishments, prestigious educational institutions like the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley are teaching classes on his thought. Rajneesh is a free-thinking religious philosopher in our age who has sparked considerable debate over his views. Like Mahatma Gandhi in the previous generation, Rajneesh has provided the impetus for meaningful intellectual and religious debate."

One of those colleagues, Diane Mintz, M.A., Rabbinic Literature, wrote: "Rajneesh's work bears the imprint not of one tradition, but of a man of intellectual penetration and insight whose perceptions of the human dilemma point not to easy solutions nor to esoteric answers, but which instead return the sensitive reader to him/herself, to an understanding of the universal human need which we continuously seek to satisfy. In his eclectic approach to religious content and form, he directs those who can hear his message to the nexus of all human experience and of all religious quests. Rajneesh's learning is staggering: He writes with equal knowledge and lucidity on Jewish mystical teachers, Japanese religious traditions, the great Chinese mystics, as well as the legendary spiritual masters of his native India. And he is conversant with Spinoza and Nietzsche as with Christ and Buddha. More importantly than his command of their thought is the new light in which he sees these progenitors of our philosophies."

From the University of Marburg, West Germany, the Professor of Practical Theology, Professor Gerhard Marcel Martin, wrote that he had "found the immediate influence, the teaching and the books of Bhagwan most stimulating, giving," he said, "a lot of impulses to keep religious traditions alive and to transform them into present myths to live by." Rabbi Joseph H. Gelberman from the Tree of Life Synagogue in New York wrote simply: "I have read all his books and felt enriched tremendously by his philosophy of life, his great understanding and tolerance of all religions."

Gabriel Looser, Th.D., a Roman Catholic theologian working in the hospital ministry in Berne, Switzerland, appreciated Bhagwan's meditation techniques. Describing Bhagwan as "a wise man, and a distinguished psychologist" he wrote, "with his meditation techniques, which he developed partly himself, he understands how to convey to us Western people something of the wisdom of the East without us having to give up the fruits of our Western cultural development and civilization."

Christiane Van der Spieren, a teacher of Roman Catholicism in Belgium for over twenty years, admired his books because they "provide a real alternative to create a new happy world and a new mankind."

The National President of the Venerable Permanent Counsel of the Orthodox Church of Italy noted Bhagwan's "enormous contribution towards raising the understanding and consciousness of the human self."

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh "is renowned throughout the world, crossing lines of religion, profession, race, creed, country, culture, age, education and background," wrote the Reverend Jill Gerhard, minister for ten years of the Church of Religious Science, San Francisco. A hostess of radio and TV talk shows in San Francisco, she also added, "I have been in the presence of many spiritual giants, I have read their works and scriptures but I know of no other now living who is so great a religious teacher or spiritual leader as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh."

Some academics discussed the historical impact of Bhagwan: "After many years of professional study on the phenomenon of enlightened masters and their religions, I feel qualified to say that the presence of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is the living embodiment of what is otherwise only academic speculation, religious dogma, or at best has become the stuff of myth and legend. Only twelve knew Jesus, perhaps several thousands recognized Buddha, today now, millions hear the silence of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh" – Dr. Agnete Kutar, Ph.D., Lecturer at the Freie Universitat of Berlin.

Alfred Bloom, Professor of Religion at the University of Hawaii, wrote: "His ideas have contemporary meaning and validity. His understanding of the modern mind and his approach to it shows great insight that it is in line with Indian traditional thought, Buddhism, and modern psychology. His relating spiritual experience and psychology is unusual and interesting. As with other religious leaders who first met persecution and rejection, it is difficult to see what influence his teaching will have in the future, just as in the first century none would have guessed the influence of Jesus two thousand years later. However, given the level of education of most of his followers and their professions, we could expect that his insights will flow into the general society."

Gregorio, the Archimandrite of Turin (Orthodox Catholic Church of Italy – Moscow Patriarchate), also looked to the future – "My encounter with the thoughts and actions of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh has been an authentic lightning bolt," he wrote. "In between two worlds, the Eastern and the Western, which he knows totally, this master can work for the rebirth of a new world, of a better world."

Summing up, Professor Maurice R. Stein of Brandeis University made the following plea to the US government: "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is a uniquely brilliant spiritual teacher. It is regrettable that he has become controversial. But," he wrote, "this country need not hesitate to accommodate controversy – especially with regards to someone whose intellectual and spiritual gifts are of such magnitude."

The US government was unmoved. It ordered Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh to leave.

CHAPTER
SIX

A WORLDWIDE DANGER

Bhagwan left America in mid-November, planning to settle in the Himalayas. The Indian government apparently had other ideas. Within three days the Western disciples who had accompanied him – his doctor, nurse and domestic staff, all of whom had looked after him for eight to fifteen years – were refused extensions of their three-week visas and ordered out of the country. At the same time, an Italian TV crew was refused visas to come and interview him for a documentary film.

The Indian government had quickly and effectively isolated him. It seemed that US Attorney-General Ed Meese's wish (he had been quoted as saying "I want that man right back in India, never to be seen or heard of again") was India's command. On Christmas Eve the three-month visa of Bhagwan's personal secretary was peremptorily cancelled, and she was ordered to leave the country by sunset. A few days later Bhagwan flew north to join the deportees in Kathmandu, Nepal.

There he began again to give discourses, and hundreds of Indian and Western tourists arrived to listen to him. Soon, however, signs of persecution reappeared – one of his staff was refused a visa extension and the police suddenly became very conspicuous. Unusual actions in a country that relies heavily on tourism. At the same time some government ministers and officials who had been coming to the discourses suddenly stopped. Pressure was obviously beginning to be applied to the tiny mountain kingdom, but from where?

Bhagwan left Nepal in mid-February on the beginning of a world tour – a tour that was to expose a lot of so-called 'independent' countries bowing to the same pressure.

He went first to the Island of Crete, Greece, where he was given a thirty-day tourist visa. He had arrived at a private airfield, unnoticed by the press. Yet mysteriously the very next morning the Athens press carried lurid stories about the "Sex Guru." Pictures taken seven years earlier at Poona showing semi-naked people were published to embellish old rumors of sex orgies. The stories continued over the following days –

obviously part of a well-orchestrated campaign.

Simultaneously the same material was sent, anonymously, to the Orthodox Christian bishops of Crete. Within just five days of Bhagwan's arrival, the Greek Orthodox Church convened a meeting of the Holy Synod to discuss his presence. They issued a declaration, published in the press, labeling Bhagwan a "severe threat to public safety." The local bishop, Metropolitan Dimitrios of Petra, distributed a pamphlet warning citizens of the danger of the Sex Guru "spinning a web" around their young people. The pamphlet accused Bhagwan of creating mental breakdowns among his followers, of conducting "unimaginable orgies," of threats, extortions, smuggling, drugs, tax evasion and general immoral behavior. In a press conference the Bishop declared, "The man is dangerous...a menace to public safety...a charlatan who buys peoples' consciences and leads them astray."

The following day Bhagwan spoke out against the Greeks, saying that if they had followed Socrates they would be the cream of society, but instead they had followed the idiot byzantines, and were still following the same idiots. The Greek press, quoting him out of context, created a sensation. The Holy Synod hastily reconvened, questions were asked in parliament, and a petition was circulated. The local bishop, in a telephone conversation with Patrick Quinn of the Athens AP bureau, stated, "We have the wish and the power to get rid of him. Either he stops preaching (Bhagwan had started giving discourses in his private garden), or we will use violence. It will come to a point that blood will flow." Quinn reported that the Bishop was in a righteous rage and was talking of going himself to Bhagwan's house to throw rocks and set it on fire.

On March 5, seventeen days into Bhagwan's thirty-day stay, armed police broke into his house while he was sleeping, arrested him without giving any reason or any warning, and took him to the port of Heraklion thirty kilometers away. He was not told where he was going and was not allowed to collect even his medicines. At the port he was advised that his visa had been cancelled by the government, and that he was to be deported to India immediately by boat. His followers managed to 'persuade' the police with a \$25,000 bribe, to allow him to leave by his own chartered jet. Government officials told the press that he was being deported "for reasons of national interest."

So Greece, the birthplace of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Democracy, had expelled a man for his ideas. "Just for his ideas," said Greek film director Nikos Koundouras, "nothing more. If ideas are still persecuted in Greece, tomorrow they will be after me, the day after tomorrow, after

you. And we will be back to where we started from." Koundouras, who had earlier criticized Bhagwan in the press, spoke out strongly after the arrest. He noted that the Church had rung out "all the bells of the land" to celebrate the victory of Bhagwan's arrest. "What victory?" he asked. "Some police cars blocked the house the Indian was staying in, the gate was broken – and the windows. They violated the door of the room he was sleeping in and they arrested him almost in his bed. When the hard America decided to deport this Indian master, it did so in the name of some transgression of a law concerning immigration. Here there is no justification at all. The one and only explanation – his ideas. This 'Anti-Christ' as the Church called him, brought nothing with him but some ideas. No drugs, no arms, no missiles. Nothing but ideas... What did the Indian want from us? He had a view, and he was free to spread it even if it annoyed us. They said he insulted the authorities. But the authorities insult each other from morning to night 365 days a year. Nothing works properly here without insults. This is the Greek custom. But all of a sudden we get vexed by the Indian who dared to say we poisoned Socrates – a real historical fact if I remember." Koundouras concluded, "His deportation is a shame... I feel ashamed."

In front of the world press which had flocked to cover his departure, Bhagwan pointed to the twenty-odd armed police who were escorting him and said "*You are as barbarous as when you poisoned Socrates.*" He noted in parting: "*A morality which has been practiced for two thousand years and is disturbed by me in just a few days is not worth much.*"

Bhagwan's next stop was Geneva, Switzerland, where he and his companions were given seven-day visas on arrival. Five minutes later, before Bhagwan had even left the jet, police with rifles surrounded it, ordered everyone to remain on board, and demanded the passports back. They stamped the visas "annulled," and ordered the jet to take off immediately. Subsequently, the head of the Department of Justice, Elizabeth Kopp, explained that a judicial decree had been issued just prior to Bhagwan's arrival, declaring him persona non grata "because of his convictions for immigration offenses in the USA," Those immigration offenses were acts commonly committed every day by hundreds of people all over the world – offenses which most governments (including America) rarely bother about, let alone pursue convictions for, offenses which certainly never bring a jail sentence for a man who has not committed any other crime. Ironical then that Switzerland, which plays a host, knowingly or unknowingly, to innumerable wanted and former criminals visiting their Swiss bank accounts, and which gave a home to Charlie

Chaplin when he was thrown out of America by the government, should turn Bhagwan away, at rifle point, on such a flimsy excuse.

Nevertheless, it did so. From Switzerland, Bhagwan flew to that haven of political refugees and human rights Sweden, where his party was assured by the immigration officer on arrival that it could stay for fourteen days. However, ten minutes later the VIP lounge in which they were waiting for transport to the city was locked by police, who remained standing in front of the doors cradling rifles. An ominous sign. The Chief of Police appeared and said the group had to leave immediately. The reason given was that the two Indians in the group did not have visas. As in Switzerland, the locked doors, the armed police, and the presence of the Chief of Police suggested something more serious.

By this time it was becoming clear from the tense 'emergency' demeanor of the heavily armed police who inevitably materialized as soon as Bhagwan's name was fed into a computer, that his computer classification must be pretty hot. He was to learn later that, almost without exception, countries had classified him a "danger to national security." Which put him in the same class as the terrorists!

From Sweden, Bhagwan's plane flew to England. It was now 8 p.m. and the pilots had been flying more than twelve hours. By law they had to rest for at least eight hours before continuing. The plane was met by officials who ordered the whole group to Immigration. Bhagwan told the officers he did not want to enter the country. He merely wanted to remain in transit overnight and leave with his jet the next morning. He was informed that it was not possible for him to stay in transit. (What did they think he was going to do there?) He and his group were interrogated for four hours, then told at midnight that they would not be permitted to enter. It was later learned that the order prohibiting his entry had been made hours before his arrival. The order stated that his exclusion from the UK was "conducive to the public good in light of his convictions for immigration offenses in the USA." Great stuff from the country that refuses to hand Sikh terrorists back to India, and which, only a few days later, permitted US warplanes to take-off from its "publicly good" shores to kill innocent bystanders in Libya!

No reason was given to the other members of his group as to why they were also detained – certainly none of them had any criminal convictions. Nevertheless they were all detained overnight in a small, dark, filthy cell crowded with refugees from African and Asian countries. In the morning Bhagwan was herded onto his plane by the usual armed guards.

Reviewing the affair in the *Lancaster Evening Telegraph*, John Clarke

didn't cause any trouble. Difficult!... Bhagwan, as usual, didn't leave his hotel room, and didn't receive any visitors. But that did not help. After a few days the press tracked him down – they had been looking for him in the Caribbean, stirring those peaceful sun-drenched islands into a flurry of frenzied press statements that Bhagwan would not be allowed to touch down on their shores. The press finally located him in the quaint Irish town of Limerick, and “Sex Guru” headlines materialized overnight in the staid local papers. Soon opposition politicians were scrambling to call press conferences demanding to know why the government had allowed this dangerous man into the country, and local churchmen abandoned their baptisms to summarily reassure their flocks that no harm would come to “the good, decent Christian people of this town.”

Meanwhile, Bhagwan was running out of countries. Canada still would not budge. Bhagwan's plane could not land there even with a bond from Lloyd's of London guaranteeing that he would not set foot on their tarmac. The delay had lost Bhagwan his destination of Antigua. While he had been flying around Europe on March 6th, a deal had been quietly struck with that Caribbean Island for him to go there. UK immigration officials learnt of this in their interrogation at Heathrow that night. The next morning the UK government sent diplomatic telexes to several Caribbean countries in the Commonwealth, including Antigua, advising that they not allow Bhagwan to enter. Antigua cancelled the deal, and on March 15 and 16, AP and UPI international wire services carried press statements from the Antigua Foreign Minister, and its Officer in Charge of Immigration, saying that Bhagwan would not be allowed to land there, and that there had never been any question that he could.

Interestingly, a few days earlier on March 13, a spokesperson from the US Consulate in Bermuda (why the US Consulate and not a Bermudan spokesperson?) had issued a statement to the world press that Bermuda was “in an uproar” over press reports that the “Sex Guru” might arrive there, and that if he did, the government would not allow him to land. There had never been any question of Bhagwan going to Bermuda, so the question arose who had given the “Sex Guru” stories to the Bermudan press, and why? And why was it that so many diverse countries – countries belonging to the European Community, Commonwealth countries, black countries, white countries, first world countries and third world countries – countries which in a world at loggerheads rarely agree on anything, suddenly were unanimous in their stand against this one man, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh? The situation was beginning to smack of some kind of international plot, of some invisible hand pulling strings behind the world arena.

wrote: "The 54-year old Indian, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, appears to be persona non grata to most governments in the world. Baby Doc Duvalier and former President Marcos seem to have more success in finding countries to stay. But Bhagwan, which means the Blessed One, is not a fallen dictator nor has he been convicted of any serious crimes. He is the spiritual master of 350,000 disciples worldwide, known as sannyasins, and his teachings are studied at the University of Lancaster which has the largest religion department in Europe." He added, "An expert on new religions, University of Lancaster lecturer Paul Heelas, shares the view that there is no justifiable reason for the guru's exclusion from Britain. Mr. Heelas, who includes Bhagwan in one of his courses, says: 'Bhagwan is perceived by his critics as being too anarchistic and a threat to established institutions. He is seen as lying outside the pale of social conventions and is shown the same antagonism which met the hippies in the 1960's.'" Clarke concluded, "Whether that antagonism and the immigration violations justify Bhagwan's exclusion from Britain and several other countries has yet to be explained."

Judith Thompson, also from the religious studies department of the University of Lancaster, explained: "Bhagwan attacks everybody in a position, whether it's government or churches. Bhagwan is about attacking beliefs, or at least bringing them to the surface, and that automatically creates controversy. In Crete they threatened to stone him – 'religious' people threatened to stone his followers... It is fear. He is seen as a powerful and dangerous man, and nobody is willing to confront that. They would much rather he was in exile, put in his place. I think they are also making an example of him – If you do this, if you don't toe the line, we are going to make sure you get no visas, no opportunities to go any further with your work." 'They' were certainly doing their best to make sure of that in the spring of 1986.

From Britain Bhagwan flew to Ireland, where, with the luck of the Irish, the whole group was given regular three-month tourist visas by the easy-going officials at Shannon. They drove to a hotel, their first civilized rest in forty-eight hours. First thing next morning the police arrived, demanded the passports, and stamped the visas "cancelled." However, there was a problem. The plane could not take off for its destination (at that time Antigua) because Canada had refused it permission to land at Gander for refueling – an essential stop as the plane couldn't land in the USA with Bhagwan aboard. And it could not land anywhere else in the world either, it seemed. Stumped, the Irish officials allowed Bhagwan to remain in Ireland while negotiations with Canada proceeded, provided he

ness." It explained: "The Ministry of Justice is denying a tourist visa to Guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. The official reason is that a visit by the controversial sage would endanger peace and order in the Netherlands. Were the government offices in the Hague plagued by frightening visions of a major fight between supporters of Bhagwan and various groups of people who were outraged because they had been deeply hurt by some of his statements? Should we presume so much unbridled fantasy there? It is true that some people – those with little sense of the absurd – may have been slightly nauseated by Bhagwan's statements about Hitler and homosexuals. Others may have felt hurt by the joking guru's strong words on Christianity, the Pope and Mother Teresa. However, by denying him a visa, it is not Bhagwan who is put into question, but Dutch tolerance and hospitality, and – however ridiculous one's opinions may be – its freedom of speech. Besides that, a group of Dutch supporters are really looking forward to his visit with great longing. And when the interests of others are not in essence harmed, the strong desires of a minority have to be considered. The most valid argument against allowing Bhagwan a visa is the fear that he may cause unnecessary pain to war victims. But to deny a tourist visa just because someone might say something about Hitler is going too far. By denying a visa, the government is being too narrow-minded."

The *De Volkskrant* editorial concluded by asking: "Is it not possible to be more tolerant, especially towards a minority group that may be passionate, but is certainly not riotous? Above all, the lack of respect for our valuable freedom of speech gives great cause for concern."

The Dutch government remained unmoved.

The German government was equally intractable. It passed an emergency decree that Bhagwan not be allowed into Germany as his presence there "would go against the State interest." The decree was described by a government spokesperson as a "precautionary measure." Great! Bhagwan was well-known in Germany through his books, over fifty of which had been translated and published by such reputable publishers as Fischer, Goldmann, Heyne, and Droemer-Knaur. In September, Frankfurt held its annual International Book Fair, the largest in the world. The theme for 1986 was "India," and one of the books featured was Goldmann's new translation of Bhagwan's semi-autobiography, *Goldene Augenblicke – Portrat einer Jugend in Indien (Glimpses of a Golden Childhood)*. The German Foreign Minister, Genscher, addressing the opening of the fair, stressed "the necessity for openmindedness in order to keep alive plurality in literature." Noting that the Fair was a fine example

Was such a thing possible in this post-imperial age of free and independent countries?

With the Caribbean sewn up, Bhagwan's friends turned to Holland. After all, it had a reputation for being broadminded and tolerant. An influential Dutch banker friend made inquiries at the Ministry of Justice early in March about a visa for Bhagwan. On March 14, the Secretary of State for Justice, on behalf of the Ministry, issued a press statement declaring that Bhagwan would not be allowed into Holland even for a short visit. The reason given was that public order might be endangered because previous statements by Bhagwan on Dutch TV about "certain persons, groups and institutions" had insulted some people, and could lead to a "negative reaction" if Bhagwan were to visit.

When questioned at a subsequent press interview about the large demonstrations staged by the Dutch people just a few weeks earlier to protest the Pope's planned visit to Holland, the Ministry spokesperson hastily terminated the interview. Earlier he had said the Government's decision was based on a TV interview from America in which, he said, Bhagwan had offended Catholicism, the Pope, Mother Teresa and homosexuals. (Since when was Holland identified with homosexuals?) What about the famous Dutch tolerance and freedom of speech? The Dutch Jurist Committee for Human Rights wondered about that. On March 17 it told the press that the government's decision was not legally correct, and that Bhagwan could only be excluded from Holland if he actually broke the law there. The decision, the Committee said, was "against human rights, against free speech, and against freedom of religion."

Others were also concerned. Writing in the Dutch national daily *Trouw*, Michael Schmidt asked, "How does the Dutch government's denial of a visa to Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, on the grounds that he could endanger the public order, relate to freedom of speech?" He referred to Bhagwan's expulsion from Greece and England, and said, "It seems clear that the fundamental rights of a very controversial but world-renowned philosopher have been violated." Schmidt queried whether the actions of the European governments were not more absurd and dangerous than the controversial statements of Bhagwan, and cited the case of Socrates who, he said, was poisoned by the establishment because he was deemed to be "corrupting the youth of Athens. It is very possible," wrote Schmidt, "that a virtual re-enactment of the Socrates tragedy of 2000 years ago is happening in the spring of 1986."

Another Dutch national daily, *De Volkskrant*, published an editorial on March 18 which called the government decision "a doubtful childish-

of this "unrestricted cultural dialogue," he said, "We (the German government) want to create around the world a free-flow of cultural and scientific information, beyond all boundaries.... We Germans know from our past what it means when books are burned and authors persecuted, and we will work tirelessly to maintain our freedom, both inner and outer, just as we will never cease to champion the freedom of others – the forbidden and the persecuted."

Laudable words. Unfortunately the government was unable to live up to them. Twenty seven Indian authors, all of them relatively unknown in Germany, were invited to attend the fair. Bhagwan was prohibited. The irony was not lost on the booktrade. In the book-fair edition of the book-publisher's magazine *Borsenblatt*, well-known journalist Rudolf Baucken wrote, "The beautiful ideals proclaimed in the opening speeches – are they really valid? If so," he asked, "why did the German government take precautions to prevent Bhagwan's appearance?" Baucken called the refusal, "a challenge to all mature citizens and those institutions such as PEN, VS, Borsenverein, etc., which stand for freedom of thought, international exchange of ideas, and pluralism." Praising Bhagwan's books for their "intellectual brilliance, their psychological depth, and their poetic beauty," he noted the old adage, "a good author is one who swims against the stream." According to that, he said, "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh must be a very good author. He was chained and thrown out of the United States; in the Soviet Union he is considered a CIA agent and his readers are visited by the KGB; in Crete the Christian bishops threatened to have him stoned; and practically all governments of the world, including our own cautious Germany, refuse him entry into their countries."

Italy, which likes to think of itself as the most democratic country in the world (something to do with all those governments?) was another country which showed up in an embarrassing light on this world odyssey. In January the W. Reich Bioenergetic Institute of Rome, Milan and Turin invited Bhagwan to Italy for a series of conferences. The invitation was sent to the Italian Embassy in Kathmandu, where Bhagwan was then staying, along with his application visa. The embassy, using the time-honored dodge of "forwarding the papers to Rome," hastily bowed out of the matter. Rome, pressured by the Reich Institute and later by Italian journalists and TV, used the equally classic refrain, "the matter is under investigation."

In March, RAI and Canale 5 Italian TV stations (the ones which had been refused visas by the Indian government to visit Bhagwan), requested short-term visas for Bhagwan to come to Italy to be interviewed. The

Italian government refused. At the time rumors were that the long arm of the Vatican was involved. Certainly the Vatican had good cause for not wanting Bhagwan in its backyard. At the end of February Bhagwan had been widely quoted from Greece by the international press as referring to the Pope as "the AntiChrist," and saying that the Pope and Christianity were responsible for AIDS – "homosexuality was born in the monasteries," he had declared.

The rumors that the Vatican immediately put a censor's ban on any further press coverage of Bhagwan, positive or negative, seemed substantiated when, in March, two major newspapers *Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera* suddenly ceased covering Bhagwan's world odyssey, major news at that time. Those papers also refused later to accept paid advertisements containing a petition for Bhagwan from Italy's intellectuals.

That petition was launched in August, when it was discovered that Bhagwan's visa application was still "under consideration." Hundreds signed it, including filmmakers Fellini and Bertolucci, writers, singers, artists, musicians, academics, scientists, psychiatrists and even politicians. As the prestigious *L'Illustrazione Italiana* magazine reported in September, 1986, "This has become a very real and a very hot issue. To (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), and only to him, has our country refused a visa, which we know only too well has been given to all kinds of terrorists. The Foreign Ministry gives no explanation, simply stating that the matter is under consideration. Why this ostracism?" asked the magazine, adding, "It is true that Rajneesh is an 'uncomfortable' person because of his public criticism of all politicians and churches, beginning with the Roman Catholic church of the 'Polish Anti-Pope Karol Wojtyla.' But is the speaking of those ideas enough to deprive him of his right to visit our country, a bastion of civilized law based on tolerance? A group of politicians, artists and journalists does not think so, and they have signed a protest which members of this magazine also join."

The petition stated that the signatories have "reasonable suspicions that strong pressures have been applied not to issue the visa to Rajneesh." It continues, "We live in a country where freedom of expression has been obtained at the price of a great struggle, and we believe that this freedom is sacred and inviolable. We ask that this freedom be granted to Rajneesh the same as to everyone else.... We are sure that the Italian culture, both secular and Catholic, need not be afraid of a confrontation of ideas with anyone in the world, whether an irreverent provocateur or a great spiritual innovator – or both."

The Italian *Epoca* magazine also raised the issue, asking, in its July 18

edition, why the Italian authorities were still denying Bhagwan a visa "when we all know that terrorists from different countries have crossed our borders, loaded with guns, bombs and hate. But not him," the magazine continued, "he cannot cross our borders – he being Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, 54, head of half a million sannyasins spread all over the world. He was invited five months ago by Guido Tassinari, president of the W. Reich Institute, to come for a series of conferences, but has been so far refused a visa. The government authorities have remained inexplicably silent on the matter. *Epoca* has tried to get an answer from the Foreign Minister, in vain. 'We have the problem under examination,' an officer told us, 'but it will take more time because of the personality of the applicant. And since the application is under examination, we cannot give you any further information. But this is normal procedure.' We doubt," stated *Epoca*, "that every Indian citizen who wants to enter Italy has to wait six months. In any case, we now address an official question to Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti: Bhagwan may be a wise guy, or a provocateur, but he comes without armies and without hate. He may say things that are not nice, but we would show ourselves better by allowing him into Italy. And if not, why not?"

Andreotti did not reply. The Italian government seemed to have taken refuge behind the venerable tradition of having 'an inquiry' continue for as long as there is any interest in a matter, then letting it quietly (and hopefully) fade away.

With the world's 'democracies' falling like flies, time was running out for Bhagwan, still holed-up in Ireland. The Irish government was getting nervous – police began to visit Bhagwan's hotel every day with dire warnings of IRA bomb threats, and inquiring when he was leaving. In the proverbial nick of time a hero emerged. Uruguay, recently released from one of those South American dictatorships, was anxious to display to the world its new independence and fledgling democracy. Bhagwan (and the millions of dollars which went with him) would be welcome: "Our country does not discriminate against anyone – we have Mafia mobsters, Nazi refugees, and former heads of just about every fallen government in South America. And of course complete freedom of speech and religion." Hoorah!

Bhagwan left for Uruguay with a three month visa and a pocketful of promises. His pilots, marooned with him in Ireland for the past ten days, obtained special permission to overfly the normal aviation limits (Canada was still scared of his landing on their soil), and re-routed the plane to South America via Dakar, Senegal.

Bhagwan arrived in Uruguay on March 19. The US Ambassador visited the Uruguayan Foreign Minister at his home in Montevideo that same night. Coincidence? (The visit was not prearranged.) The Minister, Inglaiss, was known to have his eyes on the post of Secretary General of the United Nations, and he needed American support to win it. Surprise! - In an abrupt about-face, Inglaiss, who had granted Bhagwan's tourist visa, strongly opposed Bhagwan's presence in Uruguay at subsequent government meetings, only backing down towards the end when he realized he was in a minority of one.

Meanwhile Bhagwan's friends set about calling in the promises of the new democracy. Bhagwan was issued a one-year temporary residence permit for use while his application for permanent residence was pending. Leaders of all the political parties were visited and gave their support to his application. (With a struggling economy and the usual South American need for foreign exchange, the thousands of tourists who would come to visit Bhagwan in Uruguay was a strong lure.)

Soon, however, Bhagwan's friends noticed a strange pattern emerging. Within a week or so of expressing their support, many of the politicians became nervous and began to have doubts - mentioning 'information' they had received. And suddenly there at last, in Uruguay, the whole international plot against Bhagwan was revealed. It was a truly Machiavellian plot, simple and artless, and devastatingly effective. Devastating because it was designed to work secretly without any possibility of challenge, using innuendoes and deliberate untruths in the guise of diplomatic reports - a strategy that has come to be known as the spread of 'diplomatic disinformation.'

Bhagwan's friends had received hints from government officials in other countries of dark and sinister facts underlining their rejection of Bhagwan. Mutterings and rumors of Interpol, gun smuggling charges, drug dealing and prostitution - the things any government would love to hear about a prospective resident. But they had never been able to pin down any specific allegations to refute. It was all 'top secret' government-to-government information. In Uruguay, however, Bhagwan's friends had highly placed allies. And there they unfolded the Kafkaesque workings behind the rejections that had followed Bhagwan from country to country. It was simple. Diplomatic information telexes would arrive from a number of different countries (all, incidentally, NATO members) with horrifying reports of crimes and other dastardly deeds supposedly committed by Bhagwan and his followers, and containing dire warnings of the disasters that would overtake any country which took him in. Copies of

some of these telexes, which had formed the basis of government decisions, were given to Bhagwan's friends. They were stunned – the reports contained nothing but the repetition of the most outrageously defamatory fantasies that had been concocted by the worst of the yellow press over the years. And along with the telexes went confidential ambassadorial whispers-in-the-ear of other scandals (whispered no doubt because the information was so patently fabricated it could not be committed to paper, not even 'top secret' paper). None of the informations were true. But they worked their insidious psychology. The last thing any politician in power wants is a potential scandal. Bhagwan's applications were rejected out of hand without any chance of rebuttal.

Until Uruguay. There, time and the government seemed for once to be on his side. Painstakingly (they had nowhere else to go), Bhagwan's friends pieced together all the allegations against Bhagwan, and one by one demonstrated their falsity. Insubstantial rumors were met with hard solid facts, stories were put into context, and a whole new perspective was drawn. The reports that Interpol had certain evidence were pursued. When the Uruguayan government checked, it was admitted that in fact Interpol had nothing on Bhagwan or his companions.

With the 'factual' diplomatic information reports discredited, the tactics against Bhagwan changed. The US Ambassador told the Uruguayan government, "Bhagwan is a very intelligent man. He is also a very dangerous man because he can alter the minds of other people. He's an anarchist, and will destroy the social structure of the country."

The Uruguayan government thought otherwise. Understanding the whole situation, they now agreed that there was no reason why Bhagwan should not be given permanent residence in their country. The affirmative decision to that effect was made on the afternoon of May 14, 1986, and a government press statement prepared to release the news to the world the following day. Someone (Inglaisis?) told the Americans. That night Sanguinetti, the President of Uruguay, received a call from Washington, DC saying that if Bhagwan stayed in Uruguay, current US loans of six billion dollars would be called in, and no future loans given.

At last the power behind the plot had been forced out of the closet – America. Its diplomatic disinformation scheme a failure, it had resorted to sheer Big Brother bullying, just as it had done in soliciting support from several Central American governments for its illegal contra activities. Uruguay was helpless. Embarrassed, frustrated, and bitterly ashamed to have its 'independence' exposed as a mockery, Uruguay nevertheless had no choice but to succumb.

The US screwed hard. It wanted Bhagwan out of Uruguay as soon as possible. His original three-month visa still had a few weeks to run, but the one year temporary permit was valid until a written decision was given in response to his residency application. The Uruguayan government was in an awkward situation. It could not afford (literally) to say yes to the application, and it could not say no either – there were no legal grounds for a denial which would have gone against the country's principles of human rights and its appearance of democracy. Instead it made it very clear, in the inimitable fashion peculiar to South American dictatorships, that Bhagwan should leave at the end of his tourist visa without waiting for a decision on his application. A 24-hour police surveillance was set up around Bhagwan's house, and a subtle letter invited him to 'visit' the Police Commissioner on a date that happened to be the day after his visa was to expire. Sanguinetti disappeared – to Washington, to meet with Reagan. The day the three months expired, calls came from Washington every hour to the Home Ministry, enquiring whether Bhagwan had left. He left that evening, in a convoy of police cars. In an explosive tinder-spark atmosphere, and surrounded by police, his one-year residence card was illegally confiscated and he was herded out to his waiting jet. Uruguayan friends who, right up to the end, had believed passionately in the fairness and justice of their country, waved goodbye with tears in their eyes and disillusion in their hearts. The stunned disbelief on their faces told all.

On June 19, the day after Bhagwan left, Sanguinetti and Reagan announced from Washington a new US loan to Uruguay of \$150 million.

Immigration officials at the Uruguay Department of Justice who had been handling Bhagwan's application were alarmed at their government's illegal actions. They appended a written note to his file which stated, for the record, "that the superior order that Bhagwan leave the country was verbal, with no reasons given for its implementation; that as Bhagwan's application is still being processed, the order is not in accordance with legal procedure, and is arbitrary, extraordinary, hasty, discriminatory and unexplained; and that the order goes against the established constitutional rights of a foreigner who has requested residence." That document may save the hides of its authors in a future investigation. It did not help Bhagwan.

From Uruguay Bhagwan flew to Jamaica, where he was given a ten-day visa. A few minutes after he landed, a US Air Force jet flew in and discharged two civilians, one carrying a dossier of papers. That was the afternoon of June 19, 1986. First thing on the morning of June 20, armed police

(yes, again) arrived at his house, demanded the passports of Bhagwan and his group, stamped their visas "cancelled," and ordered the whole group to leave the country that same day. "For national security" was the only reason given.

Bhagwan's host, a personal friend of both the Prime Minister and the Minister for National Security, spent the entire day trying to contact them. In vain. The whole government was 'unavailable' that day.

Columnist Morris Carghill, trying to make sense (or nonsense) of the matter, wrote in the Kingston paper the following day: "One gets the impression that the particular guru who was recently told to leave Jamaica was undesirable on the grounds that he advocated 'free sex'. I would have thought that anyone coming to Jamaica to advocate free sex would be carrying coals to Newcastle. So what's new? I have been looking up the activities of this guru in past issues of various magazines and cannot find any convincing particular reasons why so many countries should take such violent objection to him, except possibly for evasion of income tax... The real reason, it seems to me, for kicking him out is that people who set up communes with social rules greatly at variance with the rules of the country in which the commune is established are in fact challenging, and perhaps undermining, the social coherence of the country. Which is why Jehovah's Witnesses and sometimes the Freemasons have met with so much disapproval (and sometimes persecution) in many countries. They are suspected of getting up to things the rest of us do not know about. But in Jamaica the Freemasons are greatly respected and so are the Jehovah's Witnesses, though I must confess that the habit of followers of the second to visit me at inconvenient hours to press their wretched little tracts into my hands brings out the worst in me. This says much for the splendid tolerance of Jamaica." Or maybe for the pressure brought to bear on that tiny island. Carghill did not know about the arrival of the US Air Force jet. Bhagwan's friends did, and guessed that it was more than just a coincidence.

From Jamaica, Bhagwan flew to Portugal. It was an unexpected move – no prior negotiations had been made with the country. And by a lucky chance his plane landed first at Madrid, which had mistakenly been filed with the flight plan as the plane's ultimate destination. The mistake was quickly corrected in Madrid, and the plane flew on to Lisbon, but anyone attempting to track Bhagwan would have been temporarily stumped. By another lucky chance there was no computer classification against Bhagwan's name at Lisbon, and he managed to slip quietly, and it seemed unnoticed, into the country on a regular tourist visa. Within a few weeks,

however, the police turned up at the house in which he was staying – a house which, incidentally, he had never gone out of. Soon the police set up a 24-hour surveillance, and managed to thoroughly intimidate the caretakers of the house and the house owner.

To avoid the inevitable, Bhagwan decided to leave. With the rest of the world closed off to him, he had nowhere else to go but back to India – and he had to go alone. The Westerners who had been taking care of him continuously for eight to fifteen years were refused visas by the Indian government to accompany him.

At the time of writing, Bhagwan is sitting in Bombay, reading letters from disciples from all over the world saying that they have been refused visas to come and visit him. Some who did manage to get visas were turned away at Bombay airport. One prominent German doctor was interrogated for hours on arrival in Bombay, kept in a small airless room for a further twenty-four hours without food or water or the chance to call his embassy, and then put on a plane back to Germany. "You are a disciple of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh," he was informed, "and we do not want you in this country." A Canadian physiotherapist who was turned back at the airport saw his name in the immigration computer terminal, followed by the words "known to be a disciple of Acharya Rajneesh, do *not* permit entry."

What happens next remains to be seen. But it is certainly ironical that in a world where tyrants, terrorists, dictators, spies, assassins, mobsters, war criminals, international con-men, bankrupt bankers and deviants of every sort manage to find asylum somewhere to start life again, or to continue on the same path, that in such a world Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh does not have even the right to teach his disciples.

Equally ironic, and also sinister, is the role of the US government in the whole affair. That a country which provides moral support, and in some cases a home, to such infamous villains as Marcos, "Baby Doc" Duvalier, General Thieu, Samosa, Lon Nol, Batista, Stroessner and Pinochet, should expend so much energy, and be able to manipulate so many countries, to ensure that Bhagwan "is never seen or heard of again," is truly alarming. It is also puzzling.

As Bhagwan does nothing else but speak, the answer to that puzzle, and to the questions asked at the beginning of this book, obviously lies in what he says. And the answer is not too difficult to find. Bhagwan has constantly and vociferously advocated a number of drastic solutions to the problems facing humanity and the world today. Those solutions are not very palatable to the vested interests – in fact they envisage, through nonviolent means, the complete end of all current power bases – the

established religions, political systems, governments, even nations, and the creation of a totally new order.

Those ideas had a limited world audience in Poona, India, and had not been expressed for the first four years of Bhagwan's stay in America, when he was in silence. But in July, 1985, just a few months before his arrest and deportation (another coincidence?), Bhagwan started speaking again in public. On prime-time US TV he lashed out at the US government, denouncing in characteristically uncompromising terms its sham democracy, its prostitution of the Constitution, and its hypocritical Christianity. His outspoken statements were eagerly reported by the media all over America, and in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Italy, the UK and Australia. And his target was not confined to the US government. Relentlessly he assailed every established institution in the world – capitalist, communist, Catholic, socialist, fascist...the lot. And he proposed revolutionary and radical alternatives. As Tom Robbins said later: "A man who has all those kinds of ideas, they are not only inflammatory, they also have a resonance of truth that scares the pants off the control freaks."

Perhaps it was not so surprising then that it was the very institutions that Bhagwan had attacked which closed ranks against him – the US government, the KGB, the Vatican, and governments of different political persuasions all over the world.

If his views were ridiculous, why did they not just ignore him? If he was simply wrong, it should have been easy to refute him. But the deafening silence of any challenge to his ideas, and the very real presence of the global conspiracy to shut him out from the world and thereby silence him, provokes the obvious question:

Why is this man considered so dangerous? Is it perhaps because what he is saying may be right?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author is an attorney admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Victoria, Australia; the Supreme Court of Oregon, USA; the U.S. Federal District Court for the District of Oregon; the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals; and a member of the American Bar Association and Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

She accompanied Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh on his World Tour of 1986, and is currently completing another book, entitled *Was Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh Poisoned by Reagan's America?*

OTHER PUBLICATIONS ABOUT BHAGWAN AND HIS MOVEMENT

BHAGWAN: THE BUDDHA FOR THE FUTURE

by Juliet Forman, R.N., S.C.M., R.M.N.

The Rebel Publishing House

A lively and intimate account of life around Bhagwan by a disciple who has lived close to Bhagwan for thirteen years. It describes the Poona years, through Rajneeshpuram, up to the day of Bhagwan's arrest and imprisonment by the U.S. government.

BHAGWAN:

THE MOST GODLESS YET THE MOST GODLY MAN

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RAJNEESHPURAM: THE UNWELCOME SOCIETY

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Scout Creek Press

A respected Oregon journalist reveals the story behind the story: how the people of Oregon, by their fear and bigotry, did everything to ensure that the City of Rajneeshpuram would never survive.

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Dr. Ted Shay, Professor of Political Science at Willamette University, Oregon, presents the definitive study of the land use controversy: how Oregon's political and judicial systems were manipulated in an attempt to destroy the City of Rajneeshpuram.

THE WAY OF THE HEART

by Judith Thompson and Paul Heelas
Aquarian Press

The authors, from the Department of Religious Studies, University of Lancaster, U.K., take a detailed look at Bhagwan and the movement that has grown up around him. One of the few academic studies of Bhagwan and his vision.

THE RAJNEESH STORY: THE BHAGWAN'S GARDEN

by Dell Murphy
Linwood Press

A former Oregon journalist recounts with wit and verve the saga of Rajneeshpuram, closely following this battle for civil liberties in Oregon.

For further information about Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh please contact:

**Rajneeshdham Neo-Sannyas Commune
17 Koregaon Park
Poona 411 001, MS
India**

„Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is the most dangerous man since Jesus Christ . . . I think Bhagwan is a great man, and his persecution makes a liar and a hypocrite out of anyone who claims there is religious freedom in the United States.

I'm sure the U.S. government is behind all that (his being denied entry into other countries).

That's a sad commentary on freedom, isn't it?

If crucifixion were still in vogue, of course he would've been nailed up. But, since we're civilized, they had to force him into exile instead.

I'm sure they would have much preferred to crucify him on the White House lawn.

He's obviously a very effective man, otherwise he wouldn't be such a threat. He's saying the same things that nobody else has the courage to say.

A man who has all those kinds of ideas, they're not only inflammatory – they also have a resonance of truth that scares the pants off the control freaks.“

Tom Robbins, 1986

„Powerful people all over the world are trying to silence the Bhagwan.

But if they silence him, what will they gain?

You can destroy a man more easily than you can destroy an idea. And you can deny the truth, or hide it, or turn your back on it; but you cannot destroy it.“

Dell Murphy, 1986

„Rajneesh represents the kind of danger to society which has no parallel in the history of this country.“

*Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swarupanand of Dwarka
One of the heads of the Hindu Religion
India, 1987*

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